Saturday Review

of Literature

VOL. XXX No. 18 MAY 3, 1947 FIFTEEN CENTS

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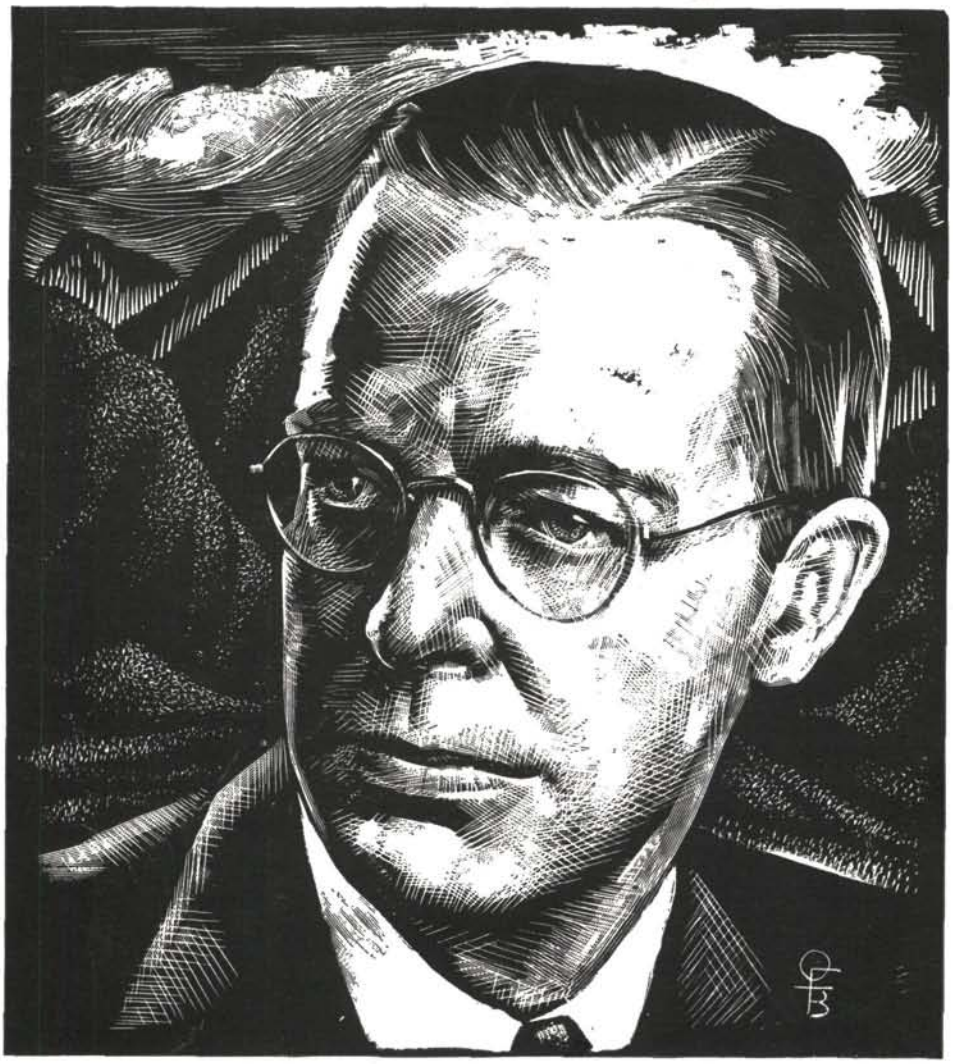

A. B. Guthrie, author of "The Big Sky." (See page 9)

The Physicist Invades Politics

By LEO SZILARD

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May 3, 1947

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THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, published weekly by the Saturday Review Associates, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y. Harrison Smith, President; J. R. Comisky, Executive Vice President and Treasurer; Norman Cousins, Vice President; Amy Loveman, Secretary; Lilian Grannon, Assistant Treasurer; Bert Garmise, Circulation Director; Arthur Bodenheimer, Assistant Circulation Director. Subscriptions $6 a year; $7 in Canada. Member of Audit Bureau of Circulations. Printed in U. S. Vol. XXX, No. 18, May 3, 1947. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Indexed in the "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature." Entire issue, Copyright, 1947, by Saturday Review Associates, Inc.

New England Office
176 Federal Street, Boston 10, Mass.

Midwestern Office
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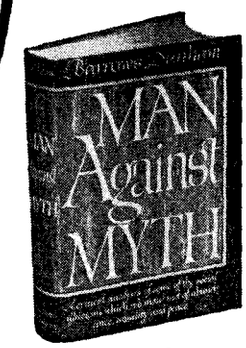

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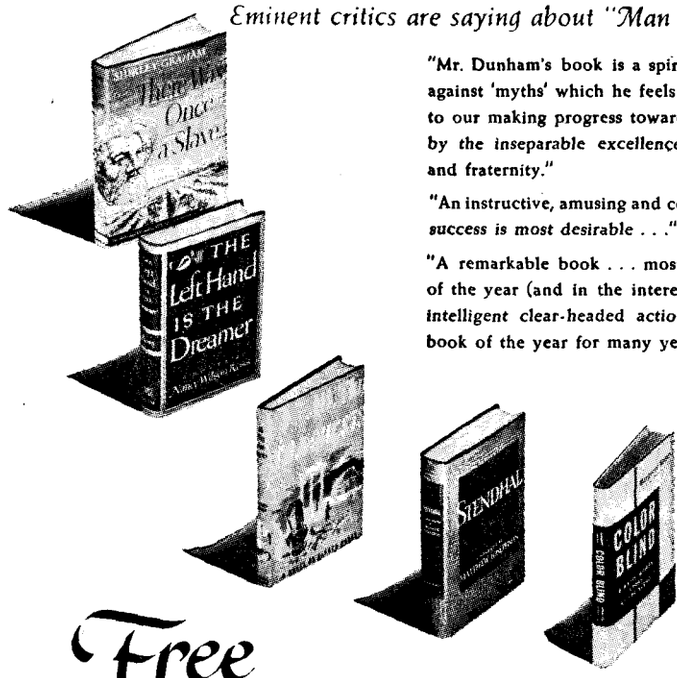

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TRADE Winds

THERE IS ONE comforting thing about rolling west from Dallas on the Texas and Pacific: you can ride all night and all the next day, past miles of flat land, tinny, dust-covered hamlets, occasional oil wells, and abandoned Army flying fields without worrying over the name of the state you're in. It's Texas, son, and when the conductor reminded me of the fact, he squared his shoulders and his eyes lit up.

"I guess this is one part of the country," I said happily to my wife as we returned from the dining car, "where we won't hear one word about the book business." "That's what you think," said an unexpected voice behind me. It was Dick Pearson, pride of Dartmouth, and head of Harper's high-school department, whose Western search for new texts seemed to dovetail miraculously with the opening of the racing season at Santa Anita. We talked shop for hours, and then the Sunday morning Los Angeles papers were taken aboard. I was delivering my uncensored opinion of same when the conductor returned to give us a bit of T. and P. folklore. (A few more trips like this, and I'll be qualified to review Lucius Beebe's next book on railroading!)

It seems the president of the road had his private car tacked on to a T. and P. local some years before, and had asked for a copy of the crew's train orders. They specified that over a stretch of newly laid, curving track, the maximum speed was to be forty-five miles an hour. When the train pulled into El Paso, the president buttonholed the engineer.

"What speed were you supposed to maintain on that stretch near Pecos?" he demanded. "Forty-five," said the engineer. "Exactly," said the president. "And how fast did you actually go?" "Forty-five, and not one bit faster," insisted the engineer.

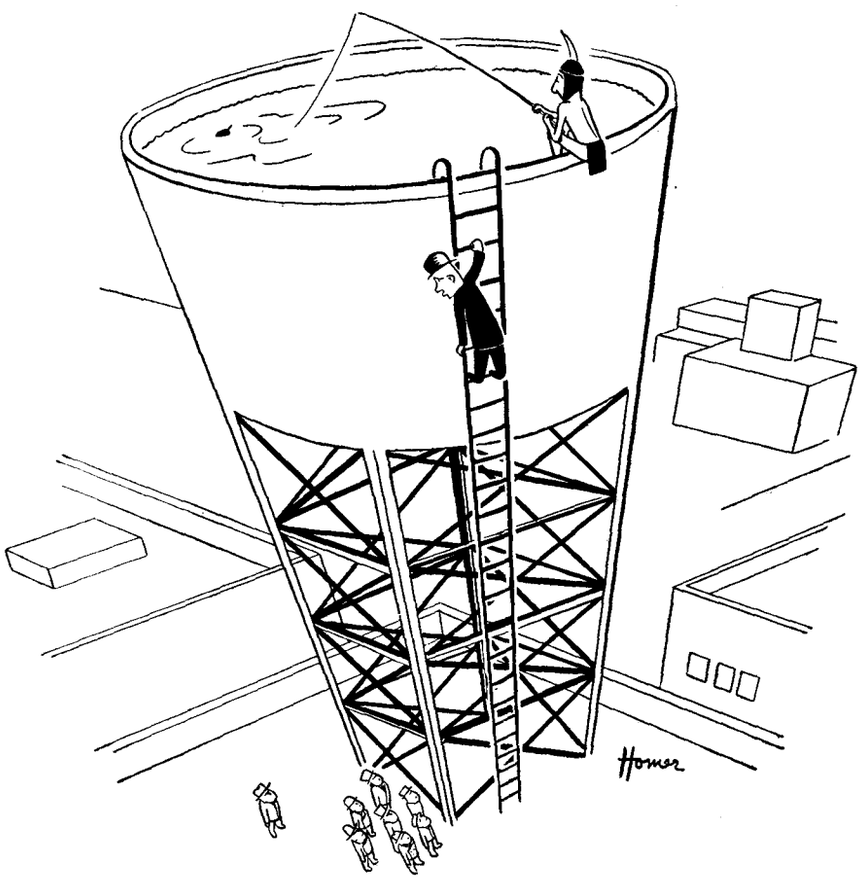
The president was unimpressed. "That's most remarkable," he declared. "*I* was in the last car in this train, and *I* have a speedometer there too, and *I* was going *sixty-two* miles an hour." "Well, I'll be ding-busted," said the engineer. "I never did see you go past us." . . .

THE ENGINEER of *our* train apparently was in no such hurry, and we ambled into El Paso over two hours late. Our car was supposed to be hooked onto the Southern Pacific's crack Sunset Limited there, and the big question was: would the Sunset wait for us? It did, and the passengers of our car, united as people always are by a common desire, thought a brief cheer was in order as we were shunted over to the proper track. "Nice of you to wait for us," said Pearson. "No trouble at all," answered the S.P. conductor. We began to see what he meant when the Sunset Limited itself remained motionless in the El Paso station forty-five minutes after our car had been attached. . . .

TO A MAN who hadn't been there in six years, the Los Angeles of 1947 was a revelation. A beautiful new terminal had replaced the old ramshackle depot. The wide open spaces that once separated downtown L. A., Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Brentwood, and Santa Monica had disappeared. Now it is one continuous metropolis, glittering and new, all the way to the sea. The crazy signs and "nutbergers" built in the form of oranges, derbies, castles, and papier-mâché Mary Pickfords had vanished. In their place were modernistic storefronts of glass and chromium, suggesting a magnified version of the 1939 World's Fair. And the people were dressed differently. I remembered the old gag about the picture director who was roused from his sleep by a cry of fire, and dressed in such a panic that when he reached the sidewalk, his coat and pants matched. That joke is sadly out of date today, because on the city streets, at least, the outlandish sports coats, and garish mufflers (instead of ties) have given way to business suits Brooks Brothers would not hesitate to display in their windows. Los Angeles, in a word, has grown up.

They say it is possible to start from one point in this fabulous place, travel eighty-five miles in a straight line, and still be within the city limits. The boulevards are crowded with shiny new cars, but judging by the manner in which they zigzag wildly from one lane to another, most of them won't stay that way long. Beautiful roads cut suddenly into the hills, where elaborate mansions are perched at angles that seem to defy the laws of gravity. To make everything more improbable, the ones at the very top are most apt to be equipped with tennis courts and swimming pools.

FRIENDS LIVE at incredible distances from one another, although most of them seem to derive a mysterious



"He says he has fishing rights anywhere in U. S. territory."

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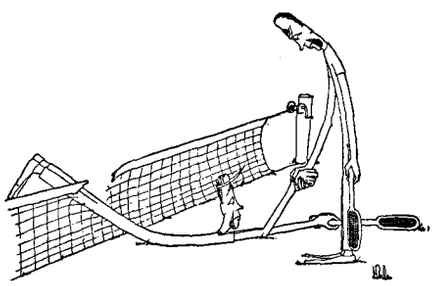
satisfaction from minimizing the time required to reach their lairs. "Everything in this confounded place," grumbled Harold Ross, "always seems to be just twenty minutes away!" It *is* possible to go from the jumble of traffic at Hollywood and Vine to a lonely, wooded mountain side in a quarter of an hour; I discovered that when I visited Ted Geisel (otherwise known as "Doctor Seuss"). Ted's neighborhood is such a wilderness that they chose it as the setting for a film called "Objective Burma." Ted is still looking for the dastardly Jap general who conked him squarely on the bean with an empty bottle of Seven-up. The general's troops were crawling through this impenetrable jungle at 4 p.m., and taking off their make-up in the Warner Brothers studio at 4:15!

Los Angeles slums are concentrated in the eastern section of town; once past La Brea, you feel you have at last reached a land of universal prosperity. The size and layouts of the new dwellings and the luxury goods that fill one shop window next to another make you wonder what on earth will happen to this Never-Never Land if another great depression ever strikes it. Today, with studios discharging thousands of employees, and slashing budgets and production schedules, some of the natives seem to be wondering a bit themselves....

ONE OF THE MOST obsolete objects in modern Los Angeles is the telephone directory, now used exclusively as a door-stop in the best homes. List your name in those bourgeois columns today, and tomorrow you wake up on the wrong side of the cracks. Remember Gisela Werbisek-Piffl? This determined and accomplished young actress not only refused to change a syllable of her name, but inserted it boldly in the phone directory—and it's still there, because I checked. As a reward, an average of two scintillating wits ring her number each week in order to gurgle, "Oh, I'm so sorry! I must have the wrong Gisela Werbisek-Piffl," and hang up amidst hysterical laughter (their own). By the time a visitor manages to track down a more conventional star's number, his quarry usually has moved to the other end of town.

I did manage to find Groucho Marx. Dave Appel wanted him to do a front-page review for the *Inquirer* of the new one-volume W. S. Gilbert. Groucho listened to the proposal in stunned silence, then thundered, "What, do a full-page review for use in *one lousy city*?" I did not press the point. Groucho was hopping over a columnar "scoop" that had the Marx Brothers all signed up to do a picture with the Ritz Brothers, "unless Chico's heart trouble proved too severe." "Chico never had a day's real trouble with his heart in all his life," said Groucho grimly, "but this story certainly ought to do the trick!" . . . I spent a morning with Harpo Marx too, but that's a story that will have to wait for another column.

THE BIG, GLITTERING parties in Hollywood always are given on Friday and Saturday evenings; during the week stars who are working usually arise at six and climb exhausted into bed before eleven. Since most of the big shindigs are catered by Prince Michael Romanoff, one soon



learns to recognize the waiters, bartenders, extra silverware, and large tent that is set up just outside the dining rooms to seat the overflow. Hostesses go to infinite pains to disguise the tent with banks of orchids and what not, but there's no disguising either Prince Mike's minions or his filets. Spectacular success as a restaurateur has left Prince Mike himself something less than ecstatic, and he seems to long for the good old days of cops and robbers with Ray Schindler and his merry dicks. The fashion this year is to serve everything in receptacles sculptured in dry ice. Miniature Empire State Buildings, sets of the Encyclopedia, and busts of General Washington melt before your eyes, and it's a wise guest who grabs his caviar before the room temperature affects its container.

Disquieting to a visiting publisher is the sensation of walking into a roomful of famous stars, recognizing virtually all of them, but realizing suddenly that you never have met them personally. Another odd sensation is provoked by listing the guests who have past wives or husbands present at the same festive board. One evening I counted fourteen guests in that predicament, including, Lord help me, myself. A star of the first magnitude had won a divorce that very morning; she gazed ecstatically into the eyes of her latest amour while Benny Goodman—in person—tooted his clarinet. "There's dear So-and-so," cooed one of her Very Best Friends. "Isn't it thrilling that she finally has won her Fourth Freedom!" BENNETT CERF.

"From where I sit"

A YEAR ago I went to see a little man as a favor to George Anthiel. He admitted he had a few book ideas, and who wouldn't. He didn't impress me very much, but I was under orders to give him a try at a book. I did, and it is the best book of its kind I have ever read.

There's only one small difficulty—I can't figure out just what kind of book it is. For there is something about H. W. HEINSHEIMER that branches out like a tree and becomes universal. Inside this little man is concealed a giant. It is comforting to know in these fearful times that there is at least one great man among us, eating toasted English in the morning and pushing through turnstiles and wishing he were somewhere else.

HANS HEINSHEIMER is a great man and he has written a great book, **Menagerie In F Sharp**. The title was picked because it connoted sharpness, crispness; because the book is a menagerie of different things; and because also the book is about music. The jacket slogan reads: The wise and witty memoirs of a music-hunting man. HEINSHEIMER is wise. Musically he knows more about the publishing of modern music than perhaps anyone alive. He has worked in high executive positions for Europe's biggest liberal music-publishing house, Universal Edition of Vienna. In Europe also he was Editor of Anbruch, the best modern music magazine. Now an American citizen, he is with Boosey & Hawkes in their New York office, and just in case you never heard of them, they are handling currently Igor Stravinsky, Aaron Copland, Richard Strauss, Benjamin Britten, George Antheil, among others.

In **Menagerie In F Sharp,** HEINSHEIMER takes you into the composer's mind, the publisher's press, the orchestra pit, the movie set, the conductor's booth back and forth across the musical world. In no uncertain terms he explains why America is the musical hope of the world. He tells you everything about music no one else has ever told. He knows music from A-flat to xylophone.

paul

DOUBLEDAY 50th Anniversary

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Infidelities of the mind . . .

THE IDEA of Paris is usually a satisfactory one to such deliberate escapists as we are on a Monday in New York. We can be working on a manuscript at the same time that we are actually sitting in a small cafe. And though we may be very thoroughly heart and hand married, the thought of one of those little idylls we used to read about in paper-bound editions--complete with small cafe, aperitif, and blonde—is a wickedness within the nature of man. It goes with the old nostalgia for strange green fields and foreign places. Infidelities in the mind happen to everyone, we tell ourselves, mentally quoting a few psychologists. If we want to spend a Monday morning from 10 to 10:30 sitting with some blonde at a rickety old iron table in Paris, it's probably a very healthy thing, we add, shoving such things as sales figures, editorial problems and typewriter ribbons out the window

The foregoing is old routine with us for a few spring months a year. We were doing it today, with the same old joyful daydream as before, when the pony express delivered to our hands the finished copy of a new book, WRITE SORROW ON THE EARTH by Charles Christian Wertenbaker. This is a book about Paris, but it is also about all of France. And it is not at all about the fairy-tale time of our imaginings. If ever there was the sort of Paris we like to think about, it must have been there because of the ability of people like these to find meaning in life when all meaning is gone.

The marriage of Paul Boissière and Simone was based on qualities that neither one actually possessed — his strength and assurance, her tranquil acceptance of life. Untested by crisis, the marriage might have continued or it might slowly have gone to pieces, each intuitively feeling pretense in the other without ever discovering the courage and devotion that lay behind the pretense.

Crisis came. It came in the form of war, of separation, of infidelity. It came, specifically, in the person of Bob, Paul's best friend. Then the pretenses fell. Paul was no longer strong, nor Simone tranquil. Suffering stripped everything away—everything but an essential integrity. And for the first time they understood each other.

If it is a part—and an important part, as we believe—of the novelist's art to pierce below the surface of events and personalities and to show the ultimate springs of action, then Charles Christian Wertenbaker has admirably fulfilled his task in WRITE SORROW ON THE EARTH. This novel is the story of a civilized modern man confronted from without by the brute fact of violence in its most hideous form, and from within by the chaos of his own emotions. It is the story of a man of thought compelled to act, and finding in action the test and validation of his existence.

When the framework of a man's life collapses, as Paul Boissière's did with the German occupation of France, he has only his inner resources to sustain him. In Paul's case these too were put in question.

He had fought the war, almost to the end, as a member of the French Resistance. His post was in the Vercors, and he had played his part well, first as a leader of raids, and later as an organizer and planner, one of the men most wanted by the Nazis. Simone was in Paris, working as a member of the Underground. Paul had not seen her for two years, but the thought of her was never far from his mind. Through danger and hardship and loneliness he had always the certainty of loving and being loved. He was buoyed up by the possibility that he would one day see her again. This was a hope that he was compelled at times to put forcibly out of his mind. There were other things to think about, enough to fill even the long days and nights in the forest when a man could easily crack up from sheer loneliness and boredom.

There was one thing all maquisards thought about a good deal—torture. How long could they stand it? Eight hours was what was expected of them. Eight hours can be a long time.

It was Bob who had to face this ordeal, Bob who escaped from the enemy and returned, broken and ashamed, to the forest. It was Bob who was sent to Paris. And it was Simone who received him there.

When Paul himself got the order he had been hoping for, to return to Paris, and found out what had happened, the emotional security that had sustained him vanished. There seemed nothing left, either within or without. Both his worlds had collapsed. And yet something was left. With Simone's help, he found it, there in Paris in the last days before the landing in Normandy. And it was something that could not collapse. The problems faced by Paul and Simone are not theirs alone. They are our problems, but lighted with cruel intensity by the fact of war.

Holding the book and remembering the tremendous emotion and drama of its people, we thought that no one ever really sits casually in a cafe, but always with a life behind and a life ahead, as Paul and Simone and Bob did. WRITE SORROW ON THE EARTH is a tribute to all that is unconquerable in the human heart, like the idea of Paris in the spring.

Write Sorrow ON THE Earth

By CHARLES CHRISTIAN WERTENBAKER

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AT ALL BOOKSTORES

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Physicist Invades Politics

LEO SZILARD

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The contribution of Dr. Leo Szilard to the coming-of-age of atomic fission ranks with that of Einstein, Lise Meitner, or Hahn. The development of the atomic pile has been the special field of this Hungarian-born physicist; to such an extent, indeed, that he may be called the father of the process. But Dr. Szilard's contribution does not end here. With another well-known nuclear physicist, Enrico Fermi, Szilard was instrumental in persuading Einstein in 1939, despite his distaste for public affairs, to warn President Roosevelt not only of the possibility and potential might of the atomic bomb, but also of the dangerous probability that the Nazis might soon have a bomb of their own. Einstein's letter to the President resulted directly in the formation of the Manhattan Project. The rest of the story is known by the world.*

The Editors of The Saturday Review of Literature *have been impressed with the emergence of many of the leading scientists of this country as public citizens. We have invited Dr. Szilard to tell why he decided to abandon the traditional hands-off policy of his profession towards matters of public policy, and also, if he wished, to present his ideas concerning atomic control.*

ON March 3, 1939, Dr. Walter Zinn and I performed a simple experiment at Columbia University. When we saw the neutrons which came off in the fission process of uranium, there was little doubt in my mind that the world was headed for trouble.

During the sleepless night that followed, I had a fairly clear vision of what these discoveries of physics were about to do to the world. But it never occurred to me what, by way of revenge, the world would do to the physicists. I did not foresee that scientists would be crowding into Washington to see Congressmen and Senators, that they would be interviewed, photographed, made into

movie characters; that they would feel impelled to write and to talk on subjects other than their own, and, generally speaking, to make a circus of themselves.

If it is remarkable that all these scientists should have found their voice, it is even more remarkable that they should be listened to. But mass murders have always commanded the attention of the public, and atomic scientists are no exception to this rule.

Science, by creating the bomb, has created a problem, and it has no solution to offer to this problem. Yet a scientist may perhaps be permitted to express opinions on the problem—not because he knows more about it than other people do, but because no one seems to know very much about it.

Some of us physicists tend to take a pretty gloomy view of the present world situation. We know that Nagasaki-type bombs could be produced in large quantities, that the United States would be in a very dangerous position if large stockpiles of such bombs were available to an enemy at the outbreak of a new war. Moreover, when we think of a war that may come perhaps ten or fifteen years from now, we do not think of it in terms of Nagasaki bombs. Nagasaki bombs destroy cities by blasts which they cause. But ten or fifteen years from now giant bombs which disperse radioactive substances in the air may be set off far away from our cities. If such giant bombs were used against us, the buildings of our cities would remain undamaged, but the people inside of the cities would not remain alive.

The traditional aim of foreign policy is to prolong the peace, *i.e.*, to lengthen the interval between wars. We physicists find it difficult to get enthusiastic about such an objective. If we accepted the view that the world has to go through another war before it arrives at a state of permanent peace, we would probably pray for an early rather than a late war. Clearly, foreign policies which may prolong the peace cannot furnish the solution to our problem.

Collective security might very well have solved the problem which faced the world in 1919. Under conditions different from those which prevail today, perhaps it could have been made to work, assuming American participation. But the ills of 1947 cannot be cured with the remedies of 1919. With the United States and Russia far outranking in military power all other nations, there is no combination of nations which could restrain by force either of these two giants.

MOREOVER, because of the possibility that Russia and America might be at war with each other at some future time, both governments consider it their duty to put their countries into the position of winning that war if war should come. Stated in these terms, their problem is not capable of a solution satisfactory to both parties. They are thus caught in a vicious circle and the more they allow their national policies to be guided by considerations of maximum relative military strength, the more rigidly their course will be determined and the less freedom of action they will retain for

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working towards the establishment of peace.

Is it possible to break this vicious circle? And if it is broken, is it possible to go further and to reach a state of permanent peace without going through another world war?

Most of us physicists believe that nothing short of a miracle will bring about such a peaceful solution. But a miracle was once defined by Enrico Fermi as an event which has a probability of less than ten per cent. This is just Fermi's way of saying that there is a general tendency to underestimate the probability of unlikely events. And if we have one chance in ten of finding the right road and moving along it fast enough to escape the approaching catastrophe, then I say let us focus our attention on this narrow margin of hope, for another choice we do not have.

IT is easy to agree that permanent peace cannot be established without a world government. But agreement on this point does not indicate along what path that ultimate goal can be approached, and not only approached but also reached in time to escape another world war.

Since our desire for security is the main reason for wishing to set up a world goverment, it may seem logical to propose that we set up at once a limited world government, which would deal only with the problem of security and the settlement of conflicts between nations, but would have practically unlimited authority within that narrow scope. Logical though this may seem, I wonder whether such a frontal attack on the problem of security is a promising approach; I am inclined to doubt that it is possible to achieve security by pursuing security.

Assuming we were successful in effecting an agreement providing for general disarmament and for the control of atomic energy along the lines of the Acheson Report—a perhaps somewhat optimistic assumption in view of the present Russian reaction to the United States proposal—this would mean that we would set up an Atomic Development Authority in charge of mining and manufacturing fissionable materials all over the world. But if this Authority lives up to its obligations to promote the peacetime uses of atomic energy, ten or fifteen years from now atomic energy power plants would be in operation in various parts of the world—many of them in Russian territory.

How should these power plants be distributed among the nations? According to economic needs? Or on the basis of military considerations? Is it possible to safeguard plants which are located on the territory of one of the major nations against seizure by the government of that nation? And if this cannot be done effectively, shall the United States exert her influence to keep the absolute number of these plants as low as possible while their distribution may be fixed by some sort of a quota agreement?

I believe the longer one thinks about the problems which would arise from such a situation, the more difficulties one will discover. As long as considerations of relative military strength remain predominant, it will not be possible to resolve these difficulties.

Clearly, as far as the United States and Russia are concerned, any agreement in this field would have to be regarded more as a voluntary arrangement than an enforceable obligation. Perhaps there will be an armed force under the United Nations in the foreseeable future which could compel the observance of obligations of this sort by most of the smaller nations, but in the absence of atomic bombs such an armed force will certainly not be strong enough to coerce the United States, nor is it likely to be strong enough to coerce Russia.

—*Historical Properties Section, War Department.*

"Under the Mushroom at Hiroshima," by R. Munsell Chambers.

UNDER such circumstances the question of incentives becomes the predominant question. The United States has obviously strong incentives for maintaining an arrangement that will eliminate atomic bombs from national armaments, for atomic bombs may be the only weapon by means of which Russia could carry war to the territory of the United States if there should be war between these two nations. Therefore the question of what incentives Russia would have for wishing to keep such an arrangement in force and what incentives she would have for wishing to abrogate it becomes the controlling factor. The problem is to find conditions under which the incentives will be overwhelmingly in favor of continued cooperation rather than abrogation.

It seems to me that this requirement could be satisfied only within the framework of an organized world community. Only within such a framework could we hope to maintain arrangements between nations long enough to give the world a chance to work out the ultimate solution of the problem of peace. Perhaps if the United States were to take the lead and if she were willing to mobilize her great material resources for this purpose, such a world community might become a reality fast enough to enable us to pass without a major accident through the transition period.

A world community of this sort would require the setting up of a number of world agencies and perhaps also some special agency to coordinate their activities. What should be the function of these agencies? What should be their scope and scale of operation?

Groping in the dark, I have made an attempt to outline the functions of at least a few such agencies. These and other such agencies taken together might form the skeleton of a structure which might be capable of being transformed within one or two generations into a genuine world government. In the meantime, each of these agencies would have its functions clearly defined by its charter, and all of these charters together would become the world law as soon as they are ratified by the United

(*Continued on page* 31)

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Wild Mountain Melody

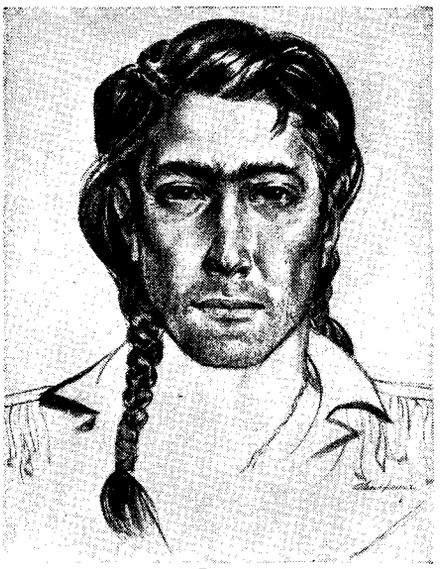
THE BIG SKY. By A. B. Guthrie, Jr. New York: William Sloane Assoc. 1947. 386 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

A STRANGE man, Boone Caudill, riding rawboned, slouched, and morose at the head of Elisha Peabody's little column into the Oregon country in 1842. Moody, hot-tempered, with childlike gusts of savagery, he seemed more Indian than white man. His hair was in Indian braids, he wore Indian clothes, and he carried amulets in a medicine bag; his face was swarthy, weatherbeaten, unexpressive; he talked in gutturals. He had taken a squaw to wife. He knew the trail across the mountains, from the Marias canyon to Flathead Lake and on to the Columbia; he knew the Flathead, Sioux, and Snake Indians; he knew every secret of the trapping business, now almost played out—the beavers had grown too scarce. The whole vast Northwest from the Missouri to the Dalles was an open book to him. But of nearly everything else he was ignorant—and he could be as dangerous as Simon Girty.

The story of Boone Caudill is the story of one typical mountain man; a son of the frontier caught up by the trapping industry at its apogee, schooled by the wilderness, the half-breed, and the Indian, and hardened to iron by peril and adversity. Wild from the beginning, he had run away from his Kentucky clearing after a hot quarrel in which he had almost killed his father. He had been chased, robbed, victimized by frontier law, and taught to rely on his own knife, fist, and gouging thumb. In 1830 he had joined a trapping expedition up the Missouri on the keelboat *Mandan*; 2,500 miles of grim, upstream toil into a country where savages, bitter winter cold, and hunger lay in wait. He had mastered the land. To drink, to fight, to outstalk the Indians, to live on buffalo, elk, and goat, and along the streams and beaver-ponds to take enough pelts to make a little money became second nature. It was a hard life in a grim country, but two loves consoled him. One, the lesser, was for Teal Eye, the squaw who bore him a blind baby. The other and greater was for the high, chill Western country, with its rolling hills, blue-white peaks, sweeping winds, and endless sky; a country where a man felt free.

In this skilfully planned and beautifully finished first novel, Mr. Guthrie has caught the spirit of the beaver-trappers and the adventurous times of Ashley, Fitzpatrick, Glass, and Bonneville. His book is essentially slight. It has only one important character, the others all being rather shadowy, and its action is devoid of complexity or suspense. It does, however, achieve a vivid piece of portraiture in Boone Caudill, so powerful in dealing with the wilderness and so weak in facing human nature and social institutions; a fellow with a mean streak in him, a semi-barbarian who fits his wild country and begins to feel lost when it grows tamer. When his blood is up he is capable of any crime, and in one fit of cold fury he kills his best friend because he unjustly suspects him of tampering with Teal Eye. Even more notable is Mr. Guthrie's success in depicting the full-bodied, peril-flavored existence of the mountain-men, taking their spoil in the country of the Three Tetons; trapping, fighting, finding trails, ready for a fracas or a frolic; going to rendezvous with their packs, and there showing off like roosters—yelling, shooting, galloping with feathers flying from their hair, their bellies full of whiskey exchanged three pints for a good pelt.



—Drawing by Alan Haemer.

Boone Caudill—"so powerful in dealing with the wilderness and so weak in facing human nature and social institutions."

The book, indeed, is like a wild melody ending on a mournful note; Boone mournful for his murdered friend, for his lost squaw, for his failure to fit into Kentucky when he finally returns home; he and the other mountain men mournful for the old days of the free campfire talk, the toil of the cordelle, the excitement of the ambush, the lush returns of the first years when streams abounded with varmints. From the beginning the shrewder trappers knew it wouldn't last. "Look," says one of them, "another five year and there'll be naught but coarse fur. The beaver's gone now. Buffler's next. Won't be even a goddam poor bull fifty years ahead. You'll see plows comin' across the plains, and people settin' out to farm." So it is that Boone and his like—fearful of being walled in by a house, wedded to the hills, the Indian

THE AUTHOR: A. B. Guthrie, Jr., is as innocent of "lit'ry" attitudinizing as the corner druggist. He's easy going and popular (probably because other people's anecdotes interest him as much as his own). He grew up in Choteau, Mont. (pop. circa 1,000), where his father was owner-editor of the *Choteau Acantha* and high-school principal. Vacations he worked on ranches, made friends with Indians, "hunted arrowheads at old buffalo runs, and lugged sun-bleached bull skulls home." He got his B.A. in journalism from the University of Montana at Missoula, then migrated to Kentucky, where he worked on newspapers, collected Western Americana, and acquired an appreciation for good Bourbon. Last February he resigned as executive editor of the *Lexington Leader* in favor of narrative writing. "I've managed to keep one jump ahead of relief since then," he says, "but, shucks, I never was more than one jump away anyhow." Several slick magazines have bought his stories. "The Big Sky," after many years' gestation, really got going in 1944, thanks to a Harvard Nieman Fellowship and ministrations of "good angel" Theodore Morrison. He lost thirty pounds writing it, "drank a lake of coffee, smoked 400,000 Camels, wound up with a bad stomach." "I work painfully," he groans. "I bleed." Meticulously, he retread the whole route of his novel, completing it "on location." He is married, has two Montanaphile children. World affairs intrigue him. He's an enthusiastic outdoorsman, loves to take off in his old car for the Kentucky hills, refinishes antique furniture as a hobby, is fond of old firearms. He, too, has his Achilles heel. His first and middle names, he insists, are his own business. Everyone calls him "Bud."

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villages, the wild fights, the yellow summer moons, the whistling winter blizzards—see the Oregon migration come like an alien invasion:

> He wouldn't hear those sounds again, or see those sights, or smell the smoke smell of quaking asp. He could hear the sharp voices of the squaws and the throaty talk of the men and the cries of children. The tones of the hunters came to him, too, and the knock of axes. He looked at the lodges standing in the glistening grass, standing clean against the blue distance. He looked at the dogs and the children trotting around the lodges, at the horses moving purposefully out to good pasture, at the river flowing steady between its fringe of trees. . . . Could he get it again in his ear and eye and nose, once he was back in Missouri with time nudging him and his hand always feeling for money?

We shall never know exactly how the mountain men talked; they had no literal reporters. We shall never know as much as we would like about their psychology; they told little of themselves and wrote almost nothing. We do not even know as much as we should about just how they dressed, fed, planted their traps, sold their plews, picked up willing Indian girls, endured their starving times, cut each other's throats, and gambled with their own lives. All this has to be patiently reconstructed with historical research, first-hand knowledge of the Western scene, and above all imagination. Mr. Guthrie has not written a great novel, but he used imagination and study to do an impressive work of reconstruction.

Allan Nevins, American history professor at Columbia and Pulitzer prize winner, will publish his "Ordeal of the Union" next fall.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 202

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 199 will be found in the next issue.

LB AGKC FLB LGMD, ELP

NPBC HPRDBCC FLB NBSF.

X. LBXXTHZ—LBCABXTNBC

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 201

All the ciphers of arithmetic are no better than a single nothing.

JOSEPH GLANVILL
The Vanity of Dogmatizing.

Europe's Walpurgisnight

THE END IS NOT YET. By Fritz Von Unruh. New York: Storm Publishers. 1947. 539 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

FRITZ VON UNRUH, a celebrated German dramatist and lyric poet fled into exile when the Nazis came to power, like Thomas Mann and many another of the creators of modern German literature. In France, during the war, he lost all of his possessions, including his manuscripts. He reached America in 1941 after Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann had appealed to President Roosevelt to rescue him out of a French concentration camp. In this country he conceived what he calls this "panorama of our apocalyptic age," relying on his own memory and "the furor anti-teutonicus." At the end of his long and strange and even monstrous novel, he has appended a brief note. He says, "I wrote down the dance of death of this age in dramatic prose, and in doing so I isolated in the darkest recesses accessible to self-analysis the bacillus which is the cause of Nazism. Not only to exhibit it to others but to point out the possibility of its eradication—was the sense of this work." "The End Is Not Yet" has had a checkered pre-publication history. More than one translator has had a hand in it, and more than one of the publishers who read it in manuscript reacted, not only "with curiosity and amazement to this epic of dramatic inspiration," to quote the author again, but with the feeling that it was not a publishable book.

Although America has been able to see little of Fritz Von Unruh's work, we have Thomas Mann's word for it that he is the most gifted dramatist Germany has produced in the last decades and that his lyric poems belong to the very best in modern German literature.

It is obvious that so deeply creative a writer, whose later works had become almost entirely symbolistic, might produce an extraordinary and perhaps overwhelming novel of the madhouse years in Europe during which the Nazis were plotting the downfall of civilization. In addition, his poetic and dramatic gifts were the outgrowth of a strong personality and powerful convictions. (He comes from a long line of wealthy Prussian landholders and his father was Governor of East Prussia and a close friend of Hindenburg.) A man of this background, after enduring the ignominy of flight and ten years of exile, after having his books burned by the Nazis when they deprived him of his citizenship, could not write an "epic" prose novel in any reasonable mood while he was still scorched by the flames of his fury against the monstrous gang who were bringing his country to ruins and thrusting another war on the whole world. But even if he were able to translate his rage into dramatic symbolism and his bitter memories into a coherent narrative there remained the question of whether the result would be a work of literary art and a book that most civilized people would be willing to read.

—Self-portrait by the author.

Has Fritz Von Unruh "carried his gigantic conception outside of the world of belief and the comprehension of ordinary men"?

The result is now before us, this explosion of words and of Walpurgis imaginings, in which apparently insane men create scenes of almost unimaginable horror and depravity.

One of these scenes seems hard to excuse; it occurs at the German Embassy in Paris where, in the presence of Hitler, Hess, Goebbels, Ribbentrop, Abetz, and a few generals, Nadia, a Polish-Jewish dancer, is thrust into the cage of a huge ape. The words that accompany this fantasy are simple enough:

> The chimpanzee encircled Nadia's hips with his enormous arm. Her cries were lost in the hullabaloo of shouts and laughter. The saliva ran down Hess's chin. He cried, "And exactly as the Pharaohs, by their laws against the Jews—to prevent the adulteration and decadence of the noble Egyptian race—hunted the Hebrews away from the Nile—" "Exactly so"—Hitler raced back to the cage—"will I disinfect the whole world of your kind!—You repulsive Ghetto sow!" "God! God!" Nadia's hands trembled impotently. "But wilt thou drown them again? Drown them, dear, dear God? In

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the Red Sea of Blood, in the Sea of Blood! The Murderers."

In another scene that same night, Buch, the chief of the Murder Division tortures and kills a Polish-Catholic dancer at Gestapo Headquarters. Later Hitler in an outburst of insane egotism tries to bring the dead girl to life. In the following quotation Hitler is addressing Field Marshal Keitel while the stripped corpse lies at his feet:

> "Keitel, listen to me. My flesh is crawling right down to the fingertips! My blood tingles as if there were ants in my veins! What? Wouldn't that be a laugh if such superhuman energy as Adolf Hitler's—confronted with the cellular structure of such a slender girl's corpse—" He crashed his fist on the keys of the spirit so that the strings twanged as if snapped—"Field Marshal! As your immediate superior and Supreme War Lord, I solemnly ask you: Do you believe I can get that dead dancer up off that stretcher?"

The reader's first meeting with Hitler comes early in the book when the dancer has been invited to Berchtesgarten to dance for the Fuehrer. His ravings when he is alone with her, when he strips her of her clothes and forces her to dance on the huge glassy floor of his study, are couched in a language unlike anything in modern literature, and the climax belongs to the realm of human behavior where insanity and perversion meet. Indeed, not once in the entire volume does Hitler or any of his assistants appear sane. Hitler's rantings and ravings dismiss the possibility from the reader's mind that he could ever have been capable of an ordered thought or of the misdirected energy that this demonic figure applied year after year to the extension of his power over the German people and over most of Europe. Such a creature as Von Unruh presents seems to be entirely a phantasy, and the people around him seem all of them to be the inmates of a madhouse.

Some truth there must be in this, but surely the vitality and the mind of the creature who brought the world to the verge of catastrophe was not wholly that of an obscene monster who refrained from normal intercourse with women to preserve his strength for his mission, and then plunged into exhausting and obscene orgies. Nor could the generals of the High Command or the heads of departments and the leaders of all his foolish, but menacing, culture and youth movements have all of them been lunatics. To believe this is to reduce the enemy, against whom the democratic world fought for almost six terrible years, to feeble-minded idiots whom a strong wind might have blown away. This book makes the grim history of the advent of the Second World War a record of human folly and improbability. Were we, then, concerned only with mad and depraved men when we awoke to the menace of Hitler's Germany? Were those tanks and planes and submarines created out of the mentality of imbeciles; were the scientists, working night and day to split the atom, or advancing years beyond the scientific achievements of other nations, were these men led only by hysterical perverts?

It seems impossible to believe it or in the demons who emerge from Von Unruh's witch's brew. Let us suppose that the whole story is an allegory and that the people in it are symbols and not intended to be accepted as flesh-and-blood men and women, however savage and dangerous we know them to have been. But symbolic and allegorical literature has to be founded on reality, especially when it deals with historical figures known, and in this case, execrated by the whole world. When the allegory seems to come straight from the records of dementia and the symbolism emerges from the pages of Krafft-Ebbing and Freud, the power that apocalyptic literature holds is reduced to almost nothing.

There is, indeed, nothing in accepted literature with which to compare this book. It is difficult to see how a recognized critic could have written for the jacket that it "remains the most vividly truthful presentation of the cancer eating into the heart of humanity since Tolstoy's 'War and Peace,' or that it is great and enduring art." There may be some truth in Richard Wright's sentence from the same source, "Unruh has completely captured, as no other writer has, the Gothic madness of Nazism, the inhumanity and irresponsibility of its leaders and the problem it poses for all mankind." It seems impossible to keep the word "madness" out of any account of "The End Is Not Yet." Von Unruh in the violent and sustained effort it must have taken to create this book may have, as in paintings of Dali and other symbolist painters, carried his gigantic conception outside of the world of belief and the comprehension of ordinary men.

Homespun Politician

STORM CENTER. A Novel About Andy Johnson. By J. Walker McSpadden. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1947. 393 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ALVIN NORTON

THE attention of history has centered upon Andrew Johnson the President, neglecting his vigorous and fruitful career as Representative, Senator, and Military Governor of Tennessee. A homespun politician with a natural ability to appeal to the plain people and an intense interest in the welfare of farmers and workingmen, "good old Andy" developed qualities of mind and character that made him a national leader. At his side stood a woman, Eliza McArdle Johnson, whose devotion and attractive personal traits did much to make his rise possible. Mr. McSpadden has done well to treat of the steadily emerging Johnson,

1845-1865, rather than of the accidental President caught in the turmoil and hatreds of Reconstruction, and pilloried by the vengeful radicals.

His novel has another merit in the faithfulness with which it depicts the East Tennessee country and its sturdy folk, among whom Mr. McSpadden was reared. The story is told by a country lad, Jo Walker, reared in Greenville, who watches Andy in his battles with Gentry, "Parson" Brownlow, and other political leaders, and ultimately accompanies him to Washington. One historical scene after another is then described in lively fashion: the great debates in the Senate, the assassination of Lincoln, the "swing around the circle," and the impeachment trial. The best part of the book, however, has its setting in Tennessee. Those who know little of the seesawing military campaigns in that state during the Civil War, and of the work of political reconstruction carried out under Lincoln's direct oversight, will find this book an interesting introduction to some neglected areas of our history. Mr. McSpadden has painted a convincing portrait of Johnson, able, earnest, and likeable, while he has made the Tennessee background seem real. The book is rather a fictionalized piece of biography than a novel, but it is none the worse for that.

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Misery Junction

BEHIND THE SILKEN CURTAIN. By Bartley C. Crum. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1947. 297 *pp.* $3.

PALESTINE MISSION: A Personal Record. By Richard Crossman. New York: Harper & Bros. 1947. 210 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by PAUL L. HANNA

JUST a year ago the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry presented its recommendations for a settlement of the Palestine problem. Today, as violence continues in the Holy Land and the United Nations prepare for new investigations and new decisions, the memory of that committee and its abortive proposals is already fading. Two new books, amazingly similar in many ways, will, however, revive interest in the work of the joint inquiry committee while they contribute to the current re-examination of the whole Palestine question.

Bartley Crum, the youngest member of the American section of the Anglo-American Committee, and Richard Crossman, the youngest member of the British section, have published almost simultaneously books which they choose to call in one case a "personal account" and in the other a "personal record" of their experiences.

They are right. For neither Crum's "Behind the Silken Curtain" nor Crossman's "Palestine Mission" is objective history. Crum gives more attention to externals and plays up the dramatic episodes of the committee's work in Washington, London, Central Europe, Egypt, Palestine, and Lausanne. Crossman devotes more attention to the evolution of his own thought as he struggled to comprehend the world-wide Jewish predicament, Zionism, and the situation in the Middle East. Crum's book tells an interesting story and tells it extremely well. Crossman's volume, too, can bring its actors to life and describe with freshness, verve, and humor the trials and adventures of a committeeman, but its chief appeal will be to those who are seriously concerned with the Jewish problem and the situation in Palestine.

Bartley Crum is a successful California lawyer and a liberal Republican who served as Western campaign manager for Willkie in 1940 and supported Roosevelt in 1944. Richard Crossman is Labor member of Parliament for Coventry, a member of the editorial staff of *The New Statesman and Nation,* and a former Oxford don. Both men, as their respective countries view the matter, belong to the political left. Both came to the Palestine problem late in 1945 relatively uninformed. Both, as a result of their four months' experience of being bombarded by Zionist and Arab propaganda, of being plunged into the Jewish and Palestine problems, and confronted by great-power rivalries in the Middle East, emerged with a pro-Zionist attitude and a belief that the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states is the most nearly just and the most practicable of the possible solutions for Palestine. Both have written books which will be vigorously attacked by the Arabs and pro-Arabs as biased and unfair and which will very probably be criticized also by extreme Zionists for failure to endorse the full Jewish state proposals of the Biltmore Program.

Crum, the lawyer, the humanitarian, and the liberal, was won for Zionism by his convictions that the Palestine Mandate gives international sanction to the claim of the Jews to build in Palestine a national home free from foreign control, that the remnants of Central and Eastern European Jews must have access to a land in which they can rebuild their shattered lives, and that the creation in Palestine of a vigorous Jewish community imbued with the ideals of political and social democracy can be of tremendous value in replacing the backward, semi-feudal, non-democratic regimes of the Arab states by a more enlightened and progressive order. He believes the present policy of the British Foreign Office and that of certain officials in the American State Department short-sighted and stupid. To build one's prestige, one's trade relations, one's security system, and one's hope of preventing an extension of Russian influence in the Middle East upon an alliance with the reactionary Arab leaders who spearhead the opposition to the Jewish national home seems to him absurd. These leaders will surely go in time and with them, if such a policy is followed, will go British and American interests. American policy and British policy as well, he argues, should foster the progressive forces of the Middle East of which Jewish Palestine is thus far the outstanding example.

Crossman, unlike Crum, approached the Palestine problem with a real though scarcely formulated pro-Arab attitude. Arab nationalism, borrowed from the West, is intelligible to the Western mind. During the Washington and London hearings of the committee, however, Crossman came better to understand Zionism—to recognize that in our nationalistic age the choice before the Jew is that between the acceptance of Zionism and ceasing to be a Jew. Later, thinking through the plight of the surviving Eastern European Jews he realized that those Jews at least *could* not cease to be Jews. They had by force of circumstances become a nation. Yet only away from Eastern Europe, preferably in Palestine, could they survive.

In Cairo, Crossman recognized that the princes, pashas, and effendis of the Arab world would be swept into the discard in the course of time. If Britain continued to ally herself with the present thin upper crust of society, then British influence would be swept away when the old order disappeared. It looked to him therefore as though the British attempt to appease Arab nationalism by maintaining the pro-Arab 1939 White Paper would at best have a very brief success.

In Palestine, he saw in its homeland the Jewish nation, politically democratic and economically socialistic, and recognized that, created as it had been under British and international guarantees, it could not in justice be destroyed. Yet he was unprepared to place all the Arabs of Palestine in a Jewish state. Then he discovered that many of the moderate Jewish leaders in Palestine would accept a partition plan which would provide the Jews an independent state in a part of Palestine if they were given a sufficient area to insure life for the national home. Here then was a solution, not perfect but possibly final. It recognized the Jewish nationhood which had already become a reality and at the same time it restricted to the smallest possible proportions the injustice done to Arab nationalism.

Crossman and Crum were in a minority at Lausanne. The Anglo-American report almost ignored partition and merely recommended continued Jewish immigration into a single United Nations trusteeship which it was hoped might develop into a bi-national Palestinian state.

This year the United Nations may give partition more serious consideration. If so, "Palestine Mission" and "Behind the Silken Curtain" will serve to create a more favorable attitude towards such a resolution of the Palestine imbroglio.

Paul L. Hanna, author of the standard reference book "British Policy in Palestine," is at present professor of history at the University of Florida.

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U. S. Policy Upheld

OUR VICHY GAMBLE. By William L. Langer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1947. 412 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by LINDSAY ROGERS

THREE years ago Secretary of State Cordell Hull, smarting under attacks by the press, suggested to the Coolidge Professor of History at Harvard University that he make a "detailed and altogether independent study" of the policy of the Government towards Vichy France "from the time of the Franco-German Armistice to the assassination of Admiral Darlan in December 1942." Mr. Langer, who was then an important official of the Office of Strategic Services and was later to be a special assistant to the Secretary of State, was willing to undertake the assignment. He accepted, however, with "the explicit understanding" that he would "serve only as a dispassionate scholar, not as an apologist." This was agreed to and Mr. Langer was promised that all relevant materials would be available to him.

The result is an absorbingly interesting book whose "publication has been authorized by the Department of State, by the War Department, and by the director of the former Office of Strategic Services." Admiral Leahy, United States Ambassador to Vichy, certifies that Mr. Langer's "statements of fact and his estimates of the various persons involved with whom I came into contact are in accurate agreement with my memories of that interesting period," and describes the book as "a valuable contribution to the history of that part of the World War." Such a wealth of official approval might well embarrass a "dispassionate historian." It certainly suggests that his reappraisal is no devastating criticism of our policy toward Vichy.

It is not. Mr. Langer's conclusion is that if we had to do the whole thing over again, we would not do it very differently. There are occasional questionings of matters of timing and detail, but the book as a whole is a thorough-going justification of the general policy—a listening post at Vichy, pressure to prevent collaboration beyond that contemplated by the armistice agreement, preparation of the ground in North Africa so that the landing met with little French opposition, and the use of Darlan as an expedient to rally colonial support.

Mr. Langer reaches these conclusions after reviewing masses of unpublished documents in the files of the State Department and the Office of Strategic Services, and in President Roosevelt's and Admiral Leahy's personal dossiers. For a period in 1941 he uses as "one of the most valuable sources" the diary of an unnamed French diplomat. He quotes communications between the French Embassy in Washington and Vichy's foreign minister, and he has talked with the principal actors who played their roles in Washington, in Vichy, and in North Africa. With a sure touch and a mastery of detail that was overwhelming, he keeps the reader from being confused and has written a story which is always readable and sometimes quite colloquial.

History, it has been said, may (or may not) repeat itself, but historians repeat each other. They do so after they have examined the materials that were used by their predecessors and additional data that may have subsequently become available. Then, relying on the evidence they have studied, they make their generalizations, which may be repetitious or corrective. For the immediate future, at least, historians of the Vichy policy will have to content themselves with repeating Mr. Langer or quoting those portions of documents which he has quoted. The materials he has used are, for the most part, still "restricted" and are not available to inquiring scholars. It is to be expected, therefore, that when the archives are opened to the public, other historians with different points of view will attach more or less weight than has Mr. Langer to certain parts of the evidence which is now available to him and which can then be examined by them. "Our Vichy Gamble," however, is the work of a "dispassionate historian," who has become no less dispassionate because he was an actor in some of the scenes he describes. There is no evidence that because the Office of Strategic Services was participating in the formulation of policy (in respect to North Africa, for example) Mr. Langer as a high official of that office views what was done more favorably than he would have had he remained on the banks of the Charles River instead of working in a building near the Potomac.

But those who were skeptical or critical of wooing Vichy or using Darlan will, I suspect, still be skeptics or critics after they have read Mr. Langer's book. Our policy, as Mr. Langer makes clear, was based on expediency and properly so. Perhaps at the time it could not have been so explained to the public. But now when Mr. Langer has let us into the secrets of diplomatic interchanges and contemporary memoranda, there is evidence that Washington always had hopes of Pétain and Darlan and occasionally of Laval. It rarely seemed to regret that it had to be expedient and to have truck with some of those whom Pertinax magnificently described as "The Gravediggers of France."

Nor could the public understand the long-continued hostility to General de Gaulle. To be sure, the expediency which required the maintenance of relations with Vichy may have barred any open approval of General de Gaulle's movement, but, as Mr. Langer presents the record, our hostility to him and our desire to invent someone to supplant him seem almost pathological. To Winston

(*Continued on page* 28)

"Pétain is quoted as describing de Gaulle [shown cementing Franco-African relations] as 'a viper that he had warmed in his bosom' and 'the traitor de Gaulle'."

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As a Russian Exile Sees It

RUSSIA: MENACE OR PROMISE. By Vera Micheles Dean. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1947. viii, 158 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by D. FEDOTOFF WHITE

VERA MICHELES DEAN who was born in St. Petersburg in Russia and left the land of her birth after the 1917 revolution—when she was still in her teens—is at present Research Director of the Foreign Policy Association. Like many other Russian exiles, who have truly made America their country and have become absorbed in their adopted land's cultural and civic life, Mrs. Dean is neither virulently anti-Soviet nor a fellow-traveler. She has a great deal of sympathy for Russia, but clearly sees the advantages of our way of life. It is, therefore, as a thoroughly informed American that she advocates the middle course.

Mrs. Dean suggests that we base our policy "on a realistic appraisal of our own national interests." She believes that our main object should be to aid forces everywhere working for the advancement of political, economic, and social ideals of democracy. This does not imply that we should harness ourselves with the panoply of St. George and "ride off in all directions" to tilt a spear at the dragon of communism the world over. A strong UN supporter, she feels that our ideals could best be realized in world affairs by "ever broadening collaboration with other people within the framework of the United Nations." Her small book contains the irreducible minimum an intelligent American should know about the USSR and our relations with it. The volume covers a great deal of ground. Brevity is felicitously combined with clarity.

Mrs. Dean readily admits that "it would be a great mistake to deny that profound differences exist between the ideas and practices of Russia and the Western world." She believes that "Russia is neither the sinister menace pictured by unrestrained critics nor the Utopian paradise depicted by uncritical admirers," and she holds that the real struggle between the United States and the USSR is for influence over the minds of men. While she is fully aware of the possibility of the struggle degenerating "into a bloody and indecisive clash of arms," she hopes for "an honorable competition for opportunities to advance human welfare, each by its own methods and on its own plane of historical development." She adds: "In this competition there need be defeats for none and there should be ample victories for all."

Vera Micheles Dean "holds that the real struggle between the U. S. and the U.S.S.R. is for influence over the minds of men."

To say the least, this is a sane view. Certainly, whether Mrs. Dean's hopes will turn into reality depends not only on the United States alone, but hinges on the policies and aspirations of the Soviet leaders, too.

The only flaw in this otherwise excellent little book is the inaccuracy of some of Mrs. Dean's references to Russia's pre-revolutionary history. One would expect her to know that Lake Peipus and not Ladoga was the scene of Duke Alexander's victory. She ought also to know where Bonaparte was in 1799, even if she has forgotten the names of the French generals Suvorov fought in Italy in that *annus mirabilis* of Russian military glory.

Mrs. Dean's book, originally one of the Headline Series published by the Foreign Policy Association, is now reissued by a trade publisher, "because both the Association and the publisher believe that its importance justifies a permanent format and a wider availability." And so it does. It is impossible to find a better compact guide to the intricacies of the Soviet system and policies.

D. Fedotoff White, historian and sociologist, has contributed to periodicals here and abroad. His latest books are "Survival" and "The Growth of the Red Army."

Ratcliff's Annual

SCIENCE YEARBOOK OF 1947. *Edited with an Introduction by J. D. Ratcliff. New York: Doubleday & Co.* 1947. 247 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by WALDEMAR KAEMPFFERT

THE fifth Science Yearbook by Ratcliff follows the general lines of its predecessors. He has culled from half a dozen magazines of bulk circulation those articles on science which have appealed to him. The result is good reading, but hardly a review of what the scientists discovered in 1946. The uses of atomic energy in bombs, medicine, and industry are subjects which were exhausted in 1945, and so with microwaves, helium (a very old subject), brain surgery, the Bogomoletz serum, soil bacteria, mechanical cotton-picking, jet propulsion, loran, helicopters, extra-sensory perception, earthquakes. "The Science Yearbook" is, therefore, not a history of science in 1946 but a collection of readable magazine articles on science. Ratcliff evidently realizes this himself, for he makes good some of the deficiencies in his own introduction.

The metropolitan newspapers all have science editors who report the latest achievements of the laboratories and who do much to keep their readers scientifically posted. To that extent the newspapers are far ahead of the magazines. But the writing in the magazines is better. All this is no reflection on Ratcliff. As an experienced science writer himself he knows a good article when he sees it. But he is limited by what *The Saturday Evening Post, The Reader's Digest, Fortune, Harper's, The Atlantic,* and other magazines consider worth publishing. The popular magazines that are entirely devoted to science have always made a poor showing in his yearbooks. We wonder why. Probably because their articles lack the touch that both he and the editors of bulk-circulation magazines consider essential.

To an educator Ratcliff's annuals supply food for reflection. For all the teaching of physics, chemistry, and biology in the high schools and universities science has evidently not seeped down to the masses. It is still necessary to write in almost baby language of principles that ought to be common intellectual possessions. So long as the teaching of science is what it is, we cannot expect more of our editors, and hence of Ratcliff. Both are doing their best.

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Leaders of Public Opinion

THE PRESIDENTS AND THE PRESS. By James E. Pollard. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1947. 849 pp. $5.

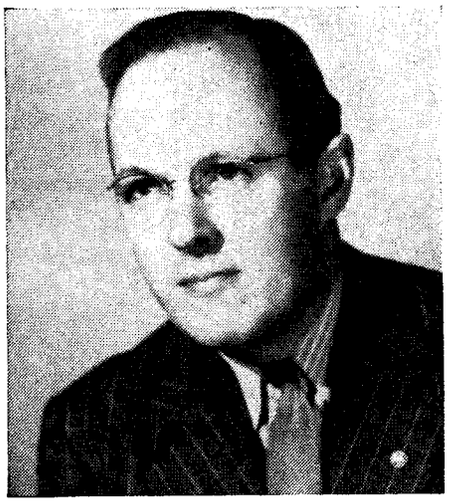
Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

NOWHERE in the Constitution is there any mention of the powers and duties of the American Chief Executive as the leader of public opinion in the American democracy. Yet the probability is that no problems of the American Presidency are more significant than those involving the constant communication of the Chief Executive with the people of the United States through the unofficial mechanisms of the American press. Political scientists have neglected it and some Presidents have been ignorant in the business. Yet the relationship of the President and the reporter is not only unique in the American system, it is the one item in it which best shows the strengths and weaknesses of Presidents, and the virtues and vices of American freedom which the press most clearly displays.

As a journalist and teacher of journalists, James E. Pollard has given us in this book about the most complete picture of the process which we possess. It runs from George Washington, almost apoplectic under press abuse, to Franklin Roosevelt, who combined scolding with the greatest skill in handling this Presidential job. It also includes editors from those to whose "malignant industry" and "persevering falsehoods" Washington referred, to reporters to whom FDR awarded the decoration of the enemy in wartime and the epithet of "chronic liar." There are, of course, many Presidential and reportorial virtues recorded in this book also. As a whole it is an excellent factual statement of a very human relationship between Presidents and reporters which is essential to the intelligent reading of the increasingly voluminous reporting of Presidential acts and powers.

It is the sort of book, indeed, which should be required reading in any effort to develop that ability to read newspapers intelligently which the very qualities of our free press demand. It throws great light on qualities essential to success in the Presidency, but it also illuminates the defects of the American press which, even at its worst, has always been pompous about its freedom. Indeed, while Mr. Pollard has described some very inept Presidents, his book may be most notable for its description of some characteristics of the press with which Presidents have had to contend. It would be too much to expect that the editors and their reporters whom he pictures should possess the genius he finds in such artists in dealing with public opinion as Jackson, Lincoln, and the two Roosevelts. The fact is, however, that in this book the American newspaperman does not generally seem superior to the American politician.

Mr. Pollard has written an inclusive book, not an incisive one. In chronological order he has presented factual essays about each President's handling of this difficult aspect of his job. And to each he has appended final paragraphs in judgment. (Franklin Roosevelt, he thinks, was the greatest President in his press relationships: "No one previous to him can approach him in this respect and it is difficult to see how any of those who follow can surpass him.") Each essay is voluminously documented. Unfortunately, however, the book is not designed for the reader who demands dramatic entertainment as well as sound information. In this day of mass reading as well as mass circulations, the book deserves a mass reception which it probably will not get. The mechanism of the free press in our republic would be a more useful one if both the history of the press and the history of the Presidency were brought by readers to every day's reading of every day's reporting in this central relationship in our democracy. Mr. Pollard's book performs no miracles, but for those who would like to bring historical perspective to today's White House reporting, it provides a basis and a beginning built from determined honesty and industrious research.



—*George X. Volk.*

James E. Pollard's book "should be required reading in any effort . . . to read newspapers intelligently."

*Power**

"Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

By Kenneth Porter

MILLENNIA hence the scientists will come—
whether from regions now mid-continental
jungles and wastes, or from another planet—
to excavate the recently discovered
monstrous constructions flung across these valleys
(Norris, Fontana, Cherokee, Watauga . . .).
They will admire the engineering skill
displayed in these great walls of masonry.
"Where else," they will exclaim, "are found such ruins?"
(Ghizeh a desert-dune, Chichén Itzá
a jungle-mound, the Empire State a mass
of fused and twisted slag and scaling rubble.)

They will explore the lairs of the Successors,
the squatting-places in the catacombs
middens of fish-bones and of mussel-shells,
(the rust-heaps of the long-forgotten turbines),
and wisely say: "When these lakes silted up,
each to a vast malarial marsh in which
the piscine life eventually perished,
the ichthyophagi moved back to the hills,
descending only in the wild-fowl season.
Look in rock-shelters there if you would find
their dwindling bones by those of deer and bear
split for the marrow. . . . But: who built these dams?
Such a great people! What could have destroyed them?"

(*After visiting the dams and plants of the Tennessee Valley Authority and Oak Ridge, Tenn., "cradle of the atomic bomb.")

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The Fairy Catastrophe

WHEN THE CATHEDRALS WERE WHITE. A Journey to the Country of the Timid People. By Le Corbusier. Translated by Francis E. Hyslop, Jr. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1947. 217 pp. $3.

Reviewed by LAWRENCE GRANT WHITE

THIS is a new translation of a book written some years ago by the French architect and city planner who has recently been called to New York as consultant for the U. N. center. It is a collection of short essays and transcripts of lectures on a variety of topics, such as his first impressions of America, our virtue and our faults, and his program for our salvation.

His observations are as sound today as they were then, and even timelier. Conditions in our cities have driven people to the suburbs, so that they not only waste time and energy in travel, but also work much longer than necessary in order to pay taxes on senseless transportation. In Le Corbusier's Utopia we would need to work but four hours a day, and live in huge, isolated skyscrapers surrounded by parks: the entire ground level would be reserved for pedestrians, with wheeled traffic on elevated speedways. He has been called an impractical visionary, and he rightly

calls us a timid people. We are surely too timid to undertake the gigantic surgical operation that would be required. But our latest housing developments are at least steps in that direction; and it is discouraging to think of what might have been accomplished at a fraction of the cost of the last war.

The title needs explanation. When the medieval cathedrals were built of fresh white stone, Europe had organized the crafts under a new technique emancipated from a thousand years of tradition. Now we are again at the dawn of a similar great epoch, with a similar creative opportunity. We have not grasped it; for when Le Corbusier arrived here twelve years ago, he found New York a catastrophe, but a beautiful, a fairy catastrophe. He has happy turns of phrase: at night, "it is a Milky Way come down to earth; you are in it." "The skyscrapers of Manhattan speak of the spiritual explosion of uncontrolled youth," and, sarcastically, "In New York, then, I learn to appreciate the Italian Renaissance. It is so well done that you could believe it to be *genuine.*" He decries the influence of the Beaux Arts, and considers modern architecture—of the vintage of 1925—as ephemeral. He goes into rhapsodies over our telephones, our elevators, the George Washington and Brooklyn Bridges, our exhibitions of modern art, our Negro music, while deploring our noisy cocktail parties, our billboards, our restless rushing about on wheels, and our families, divided because the cities are built against all common sense. To this reader at least, he seems right every time.

The book is illustrated with sketches and diagrams by the author, significant in spite of their affectively careless execution. The first of these—a sign which he considers his greatest contribution—is a representation of the incontrovertible fact that the sun rises and sets once in every twenty-four hours, bearing the caption: "This sets the rythm of work for men. This is the measure of our urban enterprises." One's first impulse is to smile; but on reflection one realizes that the solar day is the determining factor in human behavior, and the root of all the evils of traffic congestion and crowded commuters' trains.

From a literary standpoint, the book suffers from diffuseness and lack of continuity. It is like a mosaic in which golden sentences and phrases stand out against a confusing background of verbiage, without forming a unified, comprehensible pattern. Le Corbusier is bursting with stimulating ideas upon a great many subjects. They are presented without logical sequence, and often recur. Thus the reader's train of thought cannot run smoothly, but is constantly interrupted—as if by our red and green traffic lights which annoyed the author to the point of illness. It is regrettable that he did not take the trouble to rewrite this book as an integrated whole. For it lacks a plan; and as Le Corbusier himself says, the plan is the dictator.

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

APT ALLITERATION'S ARTFUL AID

In this week's quiz, suggested by several readers, you are asked to identify the authors of these fifteen samples of alliteration. Allowing seven points for each correct answer, a score of fifty-six is par, seventy is very good, and eighty-four or better is excellent. Answers are on page 27.

1. A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum.
2. The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
   The furrow followed free.
3. Sturdy and staunch it stands.
4. To sit in solemn silence in a dull dark dock
   In a pestilential prison with a life-long lock.
5. High o'er the hills of Habersham,
   Veiling the valleys of Hall.
6. If you stick a stock of liquor in your locker,
   It is slick to stick a lock upon your stock.
7. Booth led boldly with his big bass drum.
8. And comfortably beside him, and magnificently stocked,
   Was a lacquer liquor locker which a liquor lackey locked.
9. What a tale of terror now their turbulency tells!
10. Whereat with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
    He bravely broached his boiling bloody breast.
11. Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
    And the hunter home from the hill.
12. From the depth of the dreamy decline of the dawn through a notable nimbus of nebulous moonshine,
    Pallid and pink as the palm of the flag-flower that flickers with fear of the flies as they float . . .
13. The moan of doves in immemorial elms
    And murmuring of innumerable bees.
14. Punch in the presence of the passenjare!
15. The Rebel rides on his raids no more.

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Justice with Joy

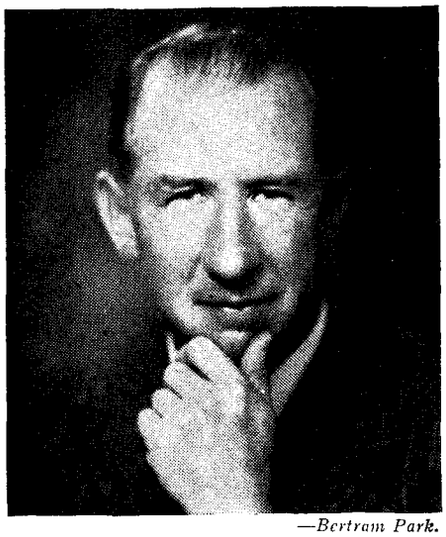
THE CHEQUER BOARD. By Nevil Shute. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1947. 380 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by
CATHERINE MEREDITH BROWN

DESPITE our vaunted liberalism, our strident soap-box screams for tolerance, no American could have written "The Chequer Board." We are not ready to react to miscegenation with equanimity nor to find a place in society for mixed marriages. Our approach to the problem assumes tragic consequences. Our theories are tinged with pity, shame, and hopelessness. It is, therefore, eminently rewarding to read such a wise, dispassionate, perceptive writer as Nevil Shute dealing with freedom recently fought for and finally won.

In moving terms we are told the story of four young warriors, neither good nor bad, neither brave nor fearful. World War II has snatched them from immaturity, educated them in the crafts of killing, and left them ill-equipped for peacetime living. Brutality can vanish, Mr. Shute assures us, and the truly pure will return to their instinctive innocence, gaining the place in the sun for which they struggled. Captain Jackie Turner, at the war's end, is told he has only a year of life left, due to a head wound suffered in a crash in 1943. Enough time to rediscover his good companions who had been hospitalized with him: the pilot, Phil Morgan, married to a ghastly gold digger; the American Negro, Dave Lesurier, saved from suicide only to meet a false accusation of rape, and the commando-trained Corporal Duggie Brent, cured of his wounds in order to face charges of manslaughter. Jackie's ten months in prison for black-market dealings had left him remote from these friends who understood and were kind to him.

The compunction to seek is heightened by the sense of doom. Adroitly and vividly, the lives are reconstructed and brought up to date. A trip to Burma reunites Jackie with the erstwhile prejudiced, "nigger"-hating, aristocratic pilot, now married to a native Burmese. Dave is found in England, married to the white girl who feared him. And Duggie, discarding his technique for murder, is married and plying a congenial trade. The wheel has gone full cycle, the game is played out, Jackie and his sadly loving wife are awaiting his death.



—*Bertram Park.*

"No American could have written Nevil Shute's 'The Chequer Board'."

The Negro's story is by far the most poignant. British compassion for the blacks is contrasted dramatically with the burning intolerance of the white American fellow-soldier. The alien sense of equality, followed by the innate fear of lynching, is here done with memorable horror. Gratefully we must acknowledge England's acceptance of Dave.

Mr. Shute, in clear, logical, and unsentimental terms, creates the final oneness of mankind. Class, rank, creed, color, good, or the appearance of evil, all merge in the vast play of the world.

"The Chequer Board" not only puts first things first but it makes virtue palatable and injects justice with joy.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 683)

IRWIN EDMAN:
PHILOSOPHER'S QUEST

. . . He was aware that philosophy is a soliloquy. . . . It is a thinking in silence and solitude; it is analysis that begins and ends in personal awareness. It is meditation spoken aloud by the unwary thinker and sometimes overheard by others.

Life's Bones Bared

THE MUSEUM OF CHEATS. By Sylvia Townsend Warner. New York: Viking Press. 1947. 249 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by CONSTANCE CURTIS

THERE is a grim humor in the pen of Sylvia Townsend Warner that strips away the outer coverings we are apt to wrap about ourselves. When she is done, the author leaves the bare, and often ugly, bone.

This collection of twenty-two short stories will be welcomed, not only by those who are acquainted with the author's earlier works, such as "Mr. Fortune's Maggot" and "Lolly Willows," but by others who have had the opportunity to read some of the present stories when they first appeared in *The New Yorker* during the past few years.

Wartime England serves as a general background for the varied scurryings of the men and women caught under the magnifying glass held so skilfully by the author. Miss Townsend is concerned with the "inconsequentials" of everyday life, which are the beginnings of important change. A common cold, for example, in the Ryder family, causes them to lose their "jewel," Stella, who, one is led to believe, might have gone on working from sunrise until sunset if the cold hadn't annoyed her beyond bearing.

One of Miss Townsend's characters, Sycomore Hoby, founded the quaint Museum of Cheats that serves as the setting for the author's title story. It displayed such oddities as "charms, philtres, talismans, magic pin cushions, books of spells, waxen images, wands, broomsticks, and blessed buns." Miss Townsend has an even more varied collection, for others of her stories deal with such modes of cheating as the reactions upon children of anti-Semitism, the tag-ends of an ill-matched love affair, of pitiable youth running toward disillusionment or being shoved there by its elders. These and a variety of others are the cheats with whom the author is concerned in her more complete "museum."

The twinges of conscience occasioned by a reading of this skilfully written collection, although good for the soul, are not harsh enough to take away the pleasure of further acquaintance with the author. While there is much in her style which calls up the desire to make comparisons with such writers as Evelyn Waugh in his "A Handful of Dust," and Philip Wylie in "Generation of Vipers," Miss Townsend still eludes such "slotting." She is indisputably herself.

All of us, no matter how secluded our lives may be, will find that at least one or two of the exhibits in the Museum of Cheats bear a striking resemblance to some people we know.

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Strictly Personal

I'M ONE OF THE WARNER BROTHERS

AS many another citizen of this happy land, I am a member of dozens of clubs and lodges ranging from the Morgan Horse Society to the All Year Round Southern California Club. But I am proudest of the twenty-five membership badge recently given me by the Brotherhood of Warners and, as a boy constantly looks at his first watch, so I cannot keep my eyes off my badge with its chased-gold motif symbolic of our activities—the cackling geese whose warning saved Rome from the barbarians.

The Warner Brothers are a large and goodly company, and there is no telling what might happen to the country without us. Perils swarm around you. You move unconsciously amid terrible dangers. The American air is thick with midnight bats of terrifying problems. If only one of them should fly into your hair-do, you'd be finished. Yet what do the majority of our citizens do about it? Nothing. They just lie there snoring in bed. Sometimes they dream. That, too, is dangerous. One of our members, Mr. Franklin Pierce Adams, has warned the nation that if you dream, keep it to yourself. He said:

> Don't tell me what you dreamt last night,
> For I've been reading Freud.

Sleep on, dream on, happy countrymen. The Warner Brothers are always on the job. While you slumber we ferret out perils whose existence you do not even suspect, and lay them alongside your breakfast grapefruit. You may be happy with your wife; your children sound; your business good. But do you know that, for example, unless steps are taken immediately there will not be one virgin stand of loblolly pine left in this country by 1975? Suppose we did not warn you of the perils that circle about your head? Your moral fibre would degenerate. You would not think of your children's children—the one group for whom we all live. You would simply fritter away your life making money and indulging in tax-exempt pleasures comparable in quality but of a lesser intensity. The United States would then go the way of the Roman Empire for, as is well known, it perished because it did not heed the warnings to practise contour plowing.

From such a fate we are saved by the Warner Brothers. They are everywhere and they are always busy. Consider the week ending January 20. In your bland ignorance of the dangers all around you, you may have thought it was a routine week. A visit to the dentist, a trip to the vet with your dog, losing $2.50 at pinochle, going after business again, giving Junior hell because of his grades. Actually it was a fateful week; one of fifty-two fateful weeks in the fateful year 1947 when, as we warn, this nation will go Right unless it goes Left. During

Paul Revere—an early Warner.

the seven days ending January 20, the Brothers warned the nation against perils any four of which in combination would destroy it; any two of which would so cripple it that it wouldn't bring as much at a surplus sale as two gross of WAC's insignia. Hear a Warner reported in *Time*:

> It was no week for the faint-hearted. Donald R. Richberg, one-time braintruster, rose in Philadelphia to warn the nation that unless labor was put in its place, the U. S. would be driven "deeper and deeper into a political war which may become a civil war."

This type of warning, outranking all others except emergency storm warnings to be posted in the area between Cape Hatteras and the Dry Tortugas, enjoys a number one priority. In the 1820's, as our records show, it was known as "sounding the tocsin." In the 1830's, "making the welkin ring." In the 1870's, "uttering a clarion call." Now known simply as a "must warning," protocol requires that the Brother issuing it do so while standing, taking the posture, slightly leant forward, of an islander sounding a conch shell to notify his brethern that the war canoes of the enemy have been sighted off Point-a-Pitre. That is why Mr. Richberg "rose" in Philadelphia.

Other warnings, important but of a nature less grave, may be made from a submarine bell, the top limb of a bee tree, or the waiting room of an out-patient clinic. These include such staple items as husked white rice the eating of which, we warn, slowly causes the bones to turn to chalk; and The Rodent Peril. Do you know that there is one rat for every person in our population; five rats for every voter; and that last year rats did damage to the extent of $412,567,879.64? This is more than the total cost of our government, including fighting the Mexican War, during the days of President Polk. Within the same category are the Coming Ice Age and the Exhaustion of our Coal Deposits. These will occur simultaneously unless, as we have warned, steps are taken. Do you realize, moreover, that you may drop dead from malnutrition at your own dinner table even while you are eating a thick steak because the steer from which it was cut lived on grass growing in the vitamin-exhausted soils of our country?

Some of our most notable warnings have been made from park benches. This method is especially favored by Mr. Bernard Baruch, who has been happily spared for long service to his country because his parents were warned not to let the child eat love apples (now called tomatoes) lest they give him cancer, and to make him sleep in a tight-shut room to keep out the noxious vapors of night air. During the wartime housing shortage in Washington, Mr. Baruch would leave his suite of rooms in the Carlton and issue warnings from a bench in Lafayette Park. Yet even as he warned the nation he was unconscious of the insects crawling about his feet; insects that, as Mr. Hearst's Sunday supplements have long warned the people, may well take over the country unless. . . . Thus the common ant—not the biting kind, mind you, but the less aggressive common or table ant that you find in your sugar bowl—lays 19,000,000 eggs each twenty-four hours, and every one of her progeny is equally productive. But how many of us, when the snow comes, and flickers cannot find ants to eat, feed the flickers that eat the ants?

At the very moment when Mr. Richberg rose in Philadelphia—such are the dangers amid which we live—another of the Warner Brothers issued a warning, as reported by *Time*, from the semi-couchant, or pondering, position. This is what he said to a nation, alas, unheeding:

> Bandleader Art Mooney, pondering what he had seen from the band-

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stand, reported that wild dancing to hot music was ruining the shapes of American girls. He noted their "piano legs, wide bottoms, thick waists, and hefty bosoms," feared an even uglier future.

Bandleader Mooney's fears of an "even uglier future" are justified. Never was the prospect of any country so black. If labor is not put in its place, we face civil war. If the girls do not stop dancing to hot music, we face a nation of female lumps; all bottom and a yard wide. Yet the latter condition may be productive of the former. For if the girls persist in stomping their figures away, men will fight a civil war seeing that there is little left to live for in a country where there is too much to come home to. The people owe Messrs. Mooney and Richberg a debt of gratitude because, with reckless disregard of their personal fate, they have warned it of an impending crisis which has no parallel in our history since that dark hour when Secretary Hay sent his fateful message to the Bey of Algiers: "Perdicaris alive, or Raisuli dead."

No less apprehensive of the future of the nation than men, many of the Warner Brothers are women. In the 1860's, for example, *Godey's Lady's Book* published an editorial: "On Novel Reading for Women." "The rage," it said, "for novel reading pervades our country as well as England. A friend of the *Lady's Book* has just sent us a letter that we give here in place of the words of warning we had intended to write . . .":

> Letter to the Editress: Will you, dear madam, say something to your young readers on the unhealthy appetite for imaginative literature which increases every day? It is a morbid and exclusive taste for fiction which has nothing to recommend it but its trivial want of the nature of truth . . . the mind is frittered away, and all strength of reasoning . . . gradually deserts the unfortunate student, whose appreciation of the best writers ceases, and among authors, *who peppers the highest is sure to please.*

The editor, as an antidote against unhealthy fiction reading, recommended the wholesome works of Dr. Cummings: "The Great Tribulation: or Things Coming on the Earth"—"The Great Preparation: or Redemption Drawing Nigh."

But the ladies, hoydenish, light-minded creatures that they are, adorable yet flighty, continued to read those authors who peppered the highest. And so unto this day we continue to warn them that unless. . . .

The Warner Brothers are not a class-conscious, exclusive group, since its membership is drawn from all ranks of society. They are, in a sense, an aristocratic group owing their position to birth, for Warners are born, not made. They have gone far since that time when Paul Revere had to content himself with the simple device of a lantern and a church tower, to this day when the Warners have at their disposal whole sections of the Sunday newspapers and the radio. No community worthy of being called civilized is now without one or more of our Brothers while, happily for them, there is always something to warn against and, happily for you, they are on hand to make the warning. As the Ideal Man of the eighteenth century was the Rationalist; of the seventeenth, the Christian stoic; of the Renaissance, the Free Individual; of the Middle Ages, the Contemplative Saint; so the Ideal Man of today is the Warner.

But let me warn you. Do not read this lying in bed because eyestrain. . . .

DAVID L. COHN.

Nuts in the Family Tree

CURIOUS RELATIONS. William d'Arfey. Edited by William Plomer. New York: William Sloane Assoc. 1947. 210 pp. $3.

Reviewed by ROSEMARY CARR BENÉT

THE Oxford definition of eccentric says "an irregular, odd, or whimsical person." One could not find more irregular, odd, or whimsical persons than Mr. d'Arfey's peculiar relations. The only strange thing genetically is that the family bred so true—that they were *all* odd—and that the oddness went on consistently for three generations or more.

We start with grandparents who "when provoked, would snatch off their wigs and fling them at one another." Grandmother was modern-minded in that she refused to have more than three children, but not knowing about "reliable methods of contraception" she flung herself down a flight of stairs to induce miscarriages, having first prudently summoned the entire staff, butler, footmen, housemaids, cook, and buttons armed with sofa cushions, to stand at strategic points in the staircase to prevent broken limbs. Then like "Sappho from her Leucadian crag," she would leap. That generation gives us a taste of what is to come—but the eccentricity, if anything, increases with their descendants. D'Arfey's father's first wife was so monstrously large that a Cadi wanted to make her his head wife, saying admiringly she was the fattest woman he had ever seen. D'Afrey's own mother, second wife Susannah, took a fancy to an owl and used to carry round what she called her "mouse basket" full of dead mice for her wild pet. The eccentricity seemed to be contagious too. Even the servants and the guests caught it in a virulent form. We hear about a lunatic cook who rushed about stark naked until forcibly restrained; and when the D'Arfeys entertained Lord Portmeirion at lunch, his old alcoholism came back over him. He departed, staggering and swaying, to address a temperance meeting, and did so, with considerable effectiveness.

The only trouble with "Curious Relations" is that it may be said to be too much of a good thing. There is a certain sameness of mood and there is not one normal person to furnish contrast to so much oddity. William d'Arfey is supposed to be the pseudonym for the gentleman who possessed these extraordinary Victorian and Edwardian relations. According to William Plomer, D'Arfey was an excellent raconteur; he liked to tell these family stories and started to put some of them down in a rough draft for a manuscript. After his death, Plomer reworked and edited his family memoir. It is fun to dip into "Curious Relations" and to pause in amazement. The entire effect, however, is a little like a child's story that gets more and more astonishing and incredible in an effort to hold the listener's attention. It is like a dish that is all curry and no rice—all spice with nothing bland. Certainly "All the world is queer save thee and me and sometimes I think thee is a little queer" could be said accurately of the D'Arfey family. Their idiosyncrasies make amusing reading.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REALISTS

UNCOMPROMISING realism has now had its greatest opportunity in the history of American literature, and certainly the greatest prestige, since the fictionized sociology of Zola. We hear on all sides that this is because of two wars and a depression. Because only honest description of what our ancestors refused to face is at the moment worth the reading time of a serious mind. Romance, we are told, has now become a commodity, ripped off by the yard, and written by what Mary Colum calls the tradesmen of literature. Romance makes money, but not a reputation. "Fancy," "invention," are the words used for it, fancy with a stiffening of history, and spiced with enough that is bawdy to suit the taste of the times. "Imagination" is a word little heard nowadays. It does not describe contemporary realism, which is more and more what the critics call "naturalism." Nor is it imagination that one seeks and finds in commercial romance.

Yet many of us feel that a swing toward a more imaginative, more emotional literature is not far ahead, nor has the interlude of war and the disillusion of peace changed our belief that this is true. The pursuit of realism in the United States has given us some of our best American literature and raised the standards of honesty in writing by many degrees. It has been successful in spite of attacks by the genteel, in spite of neglect by a wishful-thinking public, and in spite of the difficulty of making the common man seem as important and as interesting as, of course, he is. Nevertheless, out-and-out realism, while it contains invaluable elements for a literary diet, seems to be short of vitamins for the nourishing of the imagination. For example, it is evident that in this confused age leadership is the crying, the shouting need. And it should be equally evident to the historically minded that the vitamins of idealism have been part of the diet of every great leader whose career shows good will toward men. Also the vitamins of idealistic romance have been important in the expansive, the hopeful view of life. This was what Walt Whitman meant when he said in effect that the duty of literature was to present to the imagination new and better types of humanity which might serve as examples for inspiration and imitation. Realism is the best corrective of fanatical idealism and too emotional romance. But it is not good soil for the kind of imagination which can give a disillusioned society a push out of a bad present, and the courage to try to make a better future.

There is a barometer which often records in a curious way the end of a fashion or a whole literary movement at least as accurately as critical opinion. We mean the study and teaching of literature in the universities. New literary schools, pioneer authors, and fresh moods and methods of writing, begin to be taken seriously by the scholars, edited, lectured upon, and used as examples of the literary wave of the future, just as their vogue is ending, their novelty exhausted, and they are ready either to be forgotten, or to take their place in literary history with eras that still shine but have ceased to give out heat. When the universities begin to take what they call modernism seriously, it is a danger signal for critics. It may mean only that radicalism or sex in literature has become respectable, but usually there is a better reason. Hemingway, for example, became academic material when it was recognized that he had made articulate idiosyncrasies of the last two decades which have to be admitted as material for literature because they now are seen to have been obviously there. Yet recognition by teacher and scholar seems usually to come just as a Hemingway or a Proust or an Eliot has finished his job of pioneering, and, if he is still alive, is preparing to go somewhere else, or lapse into repetition. Robert Louis Stevenson was first edited for freshman classes at a time when it was daring to use any contemporary text for college instruction. But this was at the very moment when that brilliant stylist, so influential upon a generation then in its youth, was being outmoded in the literary world by new styles and new points of view. The fault was not in teaching Stevenson, of course, but in describing him as a modernist when his virtues were already those of a classic of a period definitely ended. Rudyard Kipling used to be talked about in the 1900's with the agreeable feeling that classes were being introduced to the literature of the future.

Therefore, when the scholars in our universities praise realism as the long-fought-for goal of American literature, we become skeptical. One might suppose from recent statements that all our literary creation had painfully moved toward the depiction of American man as his most disillusioned neighbors see him! It was a good job, but only one job out of many. When the half-god realism has a shrine built for him by historians and critics, and every ambitious scholar is rushing up his little chapel or monument near the altar, and candidates for the Ph.D. begin to work upon Dreiser instead of Melville and Hawthorne, then perhaps the time has come to walk to the next hilltop and look ahead.

Naturalism so-called is near a dead end. Realism in general is becoming each year less imaginative, less creative. It describes but it neither prophesies nor persuades. How long will it remain literature by any definition that is not limited to fact? Romance, which is one way, and has sometimes been the best way, of stating reality, has lain fallow dangerously long. It will come back.

H. S. C.

Cockcrow in Spring

By Christopher Morley

AT MIDNIGHT, in a sickbed world,
The yard still grimed with snow,
He arched his fated throat, and skirled,
And let his challenge go.
And still the cock doth crow.

The oldest cry above the sod
When dung and crocus blow:
The voice of the unconscious god
That bids men dig and sow.
And still the cock doth crow.

O bend the note, heraldic bird,
Like arrow from the bow;
The sharpest clarion ever heard
To let the jaded know
That still the cock doth crow.

Before centurions cast the dice
To pawnbroke friend and foe,
Or earth make her denial thrice,
Sing, chanticleer, what ho!
And still the cock doth crow.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Suggestions for Rutherford Platt

SIR: Your correspondent Mr. Rutherford Platt [*SRL*. Apr. 12] going off to the Arctic on a schooner for four months and asking for one book to read in that period, must have a radio. I hope he has anyway; but if he hasn't he would have to read that one book over and over, and I know nothing except the Bible and Shakespeare (both of which he excludes) that could stand such treatment for four months.

But what does he mean by a book? A volume, or a single piece of writing? If the latter, I can imagine no better occasion to get through the six volumes of Toynbee; or the two (but large) volumes of Spengler; or, for that matter, the four volumes of Napier's "History of the War in the Peninsula"—all of which I have got through while on my back in the hospital subsequent to being carved up by surgeons. If he means one volume I should heartily recommend (if he can get it, which he probably can't any more) Olaf Stapledon's "Last and First Men." It cannot be said that this is a book which, in Mr. Platt's phrase, would give him a deep personal satisfaction; indeed, it might give him a deep personal dissatisfaction. But it will make him think, which will do him no harm. (No reflection on Mr. Platt, whom I do not know; it would do none of us any harm.)

ELMER DAVIS.

Washington, D. C.

SIR: As a one-book nomination for Rutherford Platt, may I suggest Tolstoy's "War and Peace" (in the Maude translation) as "indeed a book you couldn't live without"?

For the last fifteen years I have reread all (or part) of W & P *at least* once a year and I'm convinced that it contains a world filled with vivid people, representing not only *real* people but *all* people. Few essential human experiences, few basic emotions, are omitted.

WILSON S. BORLAND.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

SIR: I would like to recommend a "must" book to Mr. Rutherford Platt: "The Mind In the Making," by James Harvey Robinson.

SHOHIG TERZIAN.

New York, N. Y.

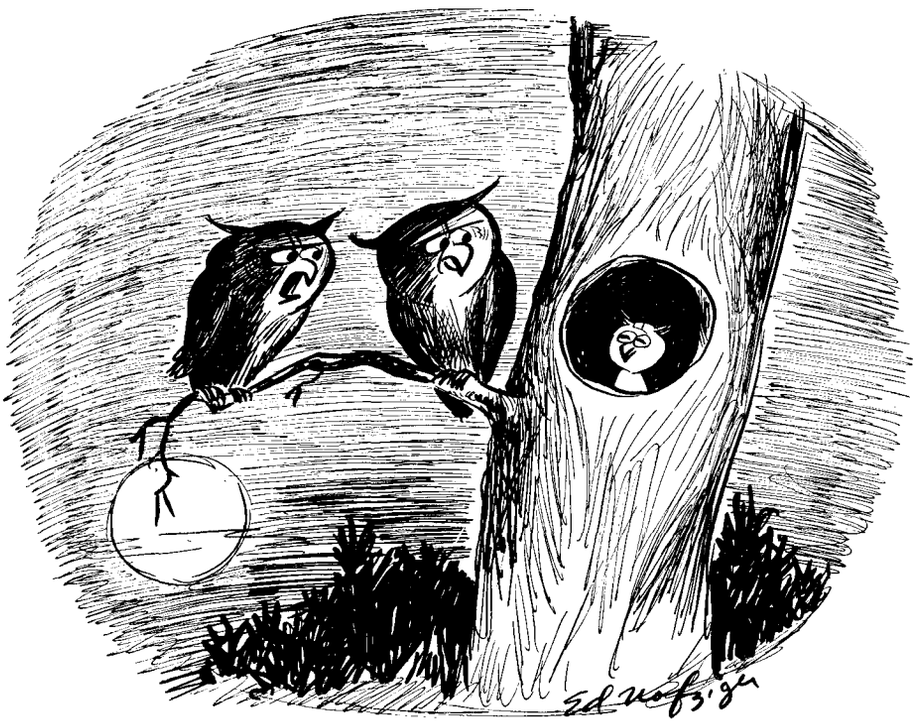
SIR: I have a suggestion for Mr. Rutherford Platt, who is about to embark on a perfectly foul four months' schooner trip to the Far North, where he will, no doubt, suffer untold discomforts and deprivations (could it be that my vines have sour grapes of wrath?).

Mr. Platt should by all means include a copy of the latest edition of "Double-Crostics."

If by chance (or certainty, if I have an opportunity to sneak aboard this chosen craft), there should be no books of reference, we stodgy stay-at-homes should be treated to a series of flamboyant Northern Lights, each vulgar display being Mr. P.'s understandable exuberant celebration on solving a D.C. on his own.

EDITH GARFIELD BLANCHARD.

Tuckahoe, N. Y.



"How can we both go out tonight if we can't get a baby sitter?"

Henry George, Abolitionist

SIR: I note that Roger N. Baldwin in his review of Charles A. Madison "Critics and Crusaders," [*SRL* Mar. 15] did not question Mr. Madison's judgment in listing Henry George with the "economic dissidents" instead of with the "abolitionists." The tenor of all George's work was the abolition of industrial slavery. William Lloyd George, Jr., son of the great emancipator, selected "The New Abolition" as the best title for the Georgist movement, as it was at first to emancipate industrial slavery. This is a worthy title and George was a worthy successor to the elder Garrison as an abolitionist; for industrial slavery is the world's most pressing problem today no matter how much the politicians, diplomats, and warriors perform nor how much we close our eyes to the realities.

But we can readily excuse Mr. Baldwin at least. His lesser appreciation of George but reflects the low ebb of passion for justice within the Single-Tax movement itself, weakened now so that it is almost silenced by less discerning but more strident claimants for attention. George did tumble out Justice at our feet again but so few were willing to recognize her after his death that the movement is now hardly to be known as any sort of revolutionary development at all. One who will read George's writings not for their literary beauty only but for the quality of justice to be found therein, will realize that he was a true abolitionist. When the blind contention of less intelligent forces shall have been spent and men look toward justice for its own saving quality in the matter of getting a livelihood for all, George may then be appreciated as an abolitionist.

ROYAL E. S. HAYES.

Waterbury, Conn.

"The World and Africa"

SIR: I wish to add my protest to other protests—which I know will come—against the review by Linton Wells of Dr. W. E. B. DuBois's book "The World and Africa," [*SRL* Mar. 29]. After reading the review I wondered: whether Linton Wells knows anything at all about the life and work of Dr. DuBois; how much first-hand knowledge he has of racial and cultural relations; and whether he has really read the book he attempts to review. Surely he has not read Dr. DuBois's other books, especially his biography "Dusk of Dawn." If he had read them he would find that Dr. DuBois has of course been in Africa and knows intimately the cultural life of its villages. If he had read them he could not make the statement, ". . . but it appears that he [Dr. DuBois] has never been nearer Africa than Europe, the Orient, the West Indies, and Russia."

RUTH E. DAVIS.

New York, N. Y.

Hymn of Hate

SIR: The fiery souls
I'd like to quench,—
Are those who curse boldly,—
Smirk,—and say, *"Pardon my French!"*

M. MOON.

San Diego, Calif.

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Latin-American Christ Legend

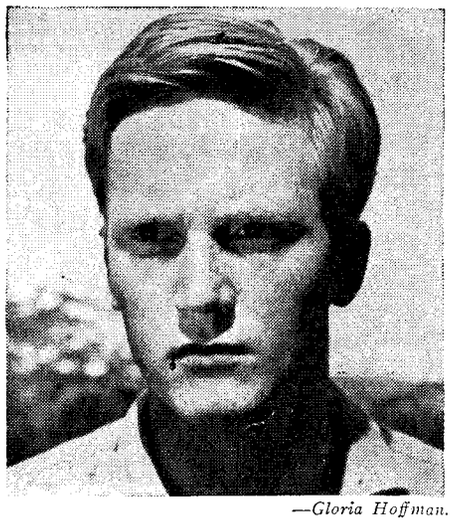
THE ROD AND THE STAFF. By Marc Brandel. New York: Harper & Bros. 1947. 254 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

UPON the face of it this is a story of peasant revolt against a fascist-type dictatorship set somewhere vaguely in Central America. At its core it is something quite different, nothing less than a philosophic allegory in which the principle of non-resistance passes like a mystical force among men and plays more havoc than war. There is in fact much of the Christ legend here, and the story suffers considerably from the fact that it makes bold use of the parallel without being able to maintain any spiritual greatness of its own in that greater shadow.

To begin with there is Passos, the revered peasant leader, a mystical prophet of non-violence. Passos makes the definite choice of surrendering himself to capture and execution without permitting a blow to be struck for him. He believes that his death will be a lasting source of strength to his followers. Passos is never seen by us—he is actor in an off-stage passion play of which we hear the cries and the echoes. That is one parallel, and it is triply underlined by the tragic behavior of Barto, Passos's mighty and violent lieutenant. Barto is stricken with despair at the surrender, and when questioned in the market-place he thrice denies that he was with Passos. There is the parallel complete, and the rest follows with inexorable logic. Passos has left another lieutenant, Miguel, who persists in the non-resistant agitation among the peasants. Barto then takes the other path, violence. He will carry on the work of Passos in his own way, with sword and brand. But even as the struggle between Miguel and Barto takes form, Barto himself is yielding to the irresistible compulsion, the heritage of Passos. He himself, after one wild gesture of brutality, turns in revulsion against it and takes up the cause of non-resistance. Now he is pitted against the disciples of force. The book ends as he faces their new leader upon a crucial instant in the revolt, the outcome indeterminate.

It is plainly a spiritual conflict, fought first upon the battlefield of Barto's consciousness and then projected, when that is won, outward upon the field among men. Mr. Brandel needed to create the one great protagonist greatly enough, to have had a memorable book. Barto is not great enough. He cannot convincingly make the metamorphosis his creator demands of him; he cannot contain the broad dimensions of the allegory or express its full meaning. Elsewhere the book is a success: in the flat, bright colors of the Central American scene, in the humble earnestness of the peasants, in the occasional clash of personalities and arms. And its noble intent is everywhere clear and arresting. It makes a fine story, even where it fails to reach its heights of revelation.



—*Gloria Hoffman.*

Marc Brandel "needed to create the one great protagonist greatly enough to have had a memorable book."

Maria-Luisa Bombal's "continual meridian shuttle" lacks "a logical, neat sense of contrivance."

Haunted Hacienda

HOUSE OF MIST. By Maria-Luisa Bombal. New York: Farrar, Straus & Co. 1947. 245 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by
CATHERINE MEREDITH BROWN

TIME, that old fairy godmother, is all out of mind in "House of Mist." Those of us, referred to by Miss Bombal with a certain eighteenth-century elegance as "reader," find the continual meridian shuttle somewhat confusing. What is established as today merges into yesterday's memories or tomorrow's fulfillment. At the drop of a thimble adult characters are catapulted back into childhood or, with a faithful reliance on destiny, vault into the future. This device can, of course, be dealt with admirably, but it demands a logical, neat sense of contrivance that is lacking here.

An emphasis on dreams, a preoccupation with that half-world between sleeping and waking, serves to heighten the value of just when an event occurred. Not only when but did it really happen? Were we imagining these fairy tale adventures? No one can be sure. In this case everyone is constantly fooling everyone else. There's no advantageous handicap of a possible clue allowed.

In a hardly apostolic succession we lead from "Jane Eyre" to "Rebecca" to "House of Mist." Mr. Rochester turns up on a fogbound isolated hacienda in South America. He is Daniel Viana, a rich, mean, cross fellow, who takes delight in torturing his second wife with the visible and invisible. Ill-tempered and tyrannical to his sister and his servants, he yet manages to enlist love and admiration in the best tradition of the gruff exterior.

The story is of Helga, illegitimate daughter of such truly romantic lovers that they actually died of love. The poor orphan lives with her beautiful, universally-desired cousin, Theresa, who surprisingly marries rough Daniel only to drown a month later. Exiling love, eager for companionship, he weds always adoring Helga. The gloomy, haunted hacienda closes in on the loyal, plain little churchmouse. But the worldly sister-in-law comes to the rescue. A ball in town, champagne, a beautiful dress, a kiss, and Helga's innate potentialities are discovered, even to the point of a dream of adultery that is convincing enough to be acceptable as fact.

The mystery of Theresa's death, of her unloving heart, is revealed in devious manner. Let us respect the desired secrecy. Suffice it to say Helga claims Daniel's love for the final close-up.

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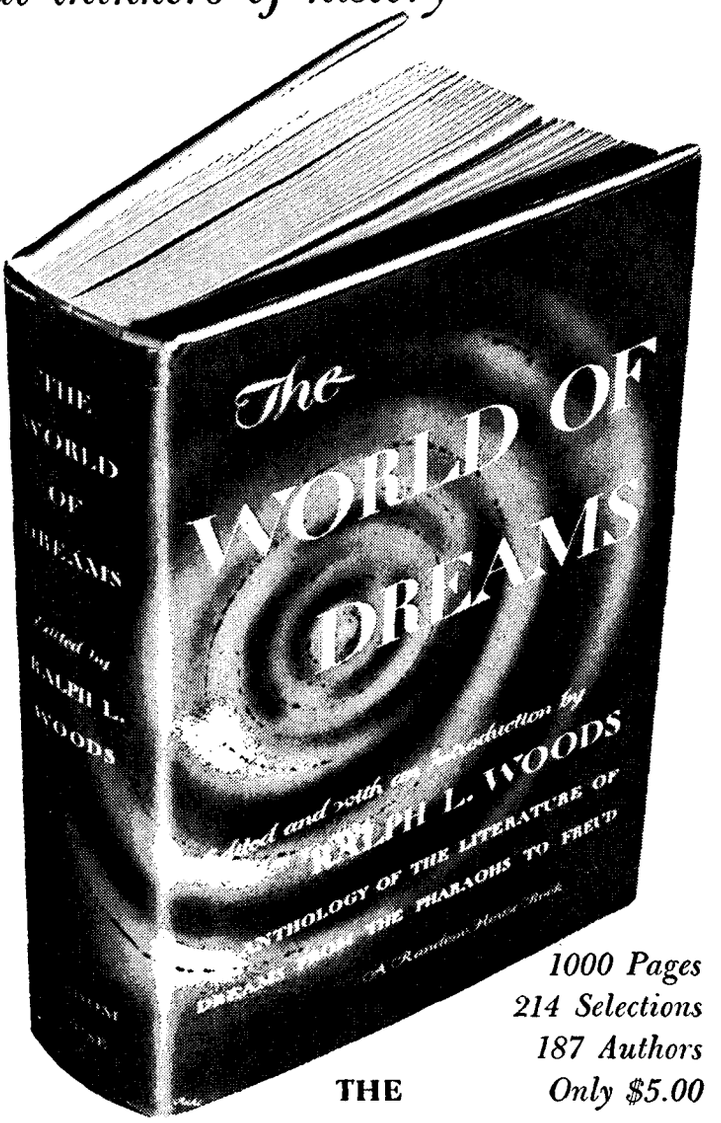

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Seeing Things

CHARLIE-INTO-CHARLES

TO THOSE who savor incongruities, perhaps the crowning comic achievement of Charlie Chaplin's career is that he is Eugene O'Neill's son-in-law. The picture of the two men meeting—of Mr. Chaplin, at fifty-eight, saluting our First Tragic Dramatist, also fifty-eight, with some such filial greeting as "Daddy," "Pa," "Pop," or even "Pater" (because, after all, Mr. Chaplin *remains* an Englishman), and of Mr. O'Neill gravely replying with such a paternal word as "Son," "Boy," or the elder Hamlet's "noble youth"—is a pretty one. In the old days it would have been fodder for one of those "Impossible Interviews" which used to brighten the pages of *Vanity Fair*.

Mr. Chaplin is, of course, a funny fellow in his own right. He always has been. No one in history has provided the round world with as many intentional laughs. Or created a fictional character better known or more greatly loved. What is more, he remains a funny fellow even in "Monsieur Verdoux,"* although he has taken pains to do away with the Charlie all of us have long cherished.

That Charlie of the baggy pants and the nailbrush mustache; that Charlie of the tattered derby and the bamboo cane; that Charlie of the pinched coat buttoned high across the chest and the vagrant shoes each of which kept heading for a different pole; that Charlie shuffling down a street and turning a corner with one foot waving in the breeze was the most ingratiating waif in or out of Christendom.

He lived—and somehow survived—in a world where for him nothing was ever right. He was the misfit made hilarious; the underdog at his most resilient; the little man at whom little men could laugh because his misfortunes were worse than theirs. The universe through which he strayed was a rough-and-tumble affair. It was as brutal as it was uproarious. He was beaten and battered at every turn. The harder his lot or the harder he made the lot of others, the more his audiences shrieked with delight.

He was the target of all pies, the butt of all attacks, the fugitive in all mad chases, the obstacle in all swinging doors, the recipient of every blow. But a shrug of his frail shoulders was enough to put Fate in her place.

In him Walt Disney's tribe could claim a grandfather. Many of the indignities to which Pluto and Donald Duck were to be subjected in cartoons, he endured as a man. There was a unique quality about him, however. It was beacon-clear from the beginning. The laughable fellow was more than comic. He was pathetic, too. His pathos stabbed the hearts of those who guffawed at him. Like every great clown he was on speaking terms with tragedy. He knew that what is ridiculous is not without its elements of sadness. Something of all human loneliness found expression in his foolishness.

This original Charlie Chaplin did not remain static. As his films grew in length and pretensions, he grew in skill and dimensions. He conquered the world first, the intellectuals afterwards. As explorers, the intellectuals were somewhat tardy. What they discovered was what the public everywhere had long known—namely, that Charlie Chaplin was a genius. The difference was that they found elaborate words and explanations for what the others had been content merely to enjoy.

Millions, of course, the globe over had doted on this same Charlie Chaplin as a low comedian. The intellectuals, however, found him to be an artist. They began to talk about the poetry of his pantomime. About the perfection of his technique. About his sense of timing. About his style. About the Commedia dell'Arte in relation to him. About the tragedian lurking in the pie-slinger, the wonder of his invention, and the elements of music in his acting.

For once they were right. For once, too, though the esthetes and the devotees of burlesque may have employed different vocabularies, on the subject of Charlie Chaplin they saw eye-to-eye. The character he had invented had crossed all frontiers. He was a world figure who added not only to the gaiety of nations but to the joy of individuals.

The intellectuals are never satisfied with things as they are. In the instance of Charlie Chaplin they could not bear to leave well enough alone, although here the "well enough" was the world's best of its particular kind. They did not want to pull Charlie up by his bootstraps. They sought to measure him by their own hatbands. Their desire was to improve upon what was perfect; to intellectualize what was physical, natural, uninhibited, and expert. They began to see him not in his own terms but in theirs.

THEY visualized him as Peer Gynt, as the Clown in "He Who Gets Slapped." Yes, they even got around to dangling Hamlet before his eyes. Although wisdom was their stock-in-trade, the intellectuals proved less

Martha Raye and Charles Chaplin, alias M. Verdoux, murderer—"the only unforgivable murder for which M. Verdoux is responsible is of the tramp who was Charlie Chaplin."

**MONSIEUR VERDOUX, a screen play by Charles Chaplin. Directed and produced by Mr. Chaplin. Released by United Artists. With a cast including Charles Chaplin, Mady Correll, Allison Roddan, Martha Raye, Isobel Elsom, Bernard J. Neden, etc. At the Broadway.*

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wise than more unpretentious moviegoers. The rest of the world relished Charlie Chaplin as he was. The intellectuals' affection for him, though genuine, was dangerously paradoxical. Apparently they loved him so much that they wanted him to be different.

In "Monsieur Verdoux" they have had their way. Mr. Chaplin *is* different. He is no longer Charlie. He is now Charles. That is something of a storm signal. Gone are the baggy pants. Gone are the derby and the pinch-bottle coat. Gone is the mustache which, in "The Great Dictator," proved so lethal a weapon against Hitler's pomposity. Gone are the pies, too. Indeed, gone as though through an oubliette is the beloved character who turned all the earlier Chaplin films, short or long, simple or ambitious, into parts of a wondrous serial.

In his place steps Henri Verdoux, as dapper, immaculate, and dandyish a little fellow as any floorwalker in France could dream of becoming. He is a Bluebeard who is a Beau Brummel, a Landau spruce in Clifton Webb's fashion. He is a spick-and-span as the earlier Charlie was disheveled. To be sure, he sports a mustache, but even it is not the sprouting it once was. Instead of covering the whole upper lip, it has now shrunk to the dimensions of an underfed caterpillar. It is thin, menacing, predatory, and has lost all kinship to laughter. What adds to the complications of judging Mr. Chaplin's new character is that in most respects this M. Verdoux bears so striking a resemblance to Mr. Chaplin's off-screen photographs.

Mr. Chaplin is not the first great artist who as an artist has made admiration easy and who as a man has made it difficult. Nor will he be the last. His performances have been more praiseworthy in front of the camera than away from it. Unlike his acting personality, his personal record is not engaging. His amatory activities have had their Keystone aspects. They would have been laughable, had the scandals they provoked not been sordid. He has scarcely been a model citizen. Apparently, he has felt that his obligations were ended with the enormous taxes he pays.

He has described himself as an "internationalist." In his case this has meant being a British subject, residing in the safety of the United States during two conflicts which have threatened the life of both Britain and America. Contrary to the example set by many of his profession, his helpfulness at bond rallies has not been conspicuous. His premature demand for a second front during the last war, when he had done nothing about any front during the first war,

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found him for once without any humor whatsoever. Yet, regardless of the low esteem in which many may hold him as a man, everyone's opinion of him as an artist must be high.

Although "Monsieur Verdoux" is an indifferent film, tedious, spotty, and repetitious, Mr. Chaplin's performance in it is far from indifferent. In or out of his old character, with or without his former make-up and costume, he is an incomparable actor. He is now appearing as a Parisian bank clerk who, after the depression, has turned to the liquidation of comfortably endowed women as the somewhat original means of supporting the child and crippled wife he loves.

Being a later day Chaplin film, "Monsieur Verdoux" does not conclude without a preachment. Mr. Chaplin of recent years has made it clear that he is a comedian who seeks to employ comedy to say serious things. Although his thesis this time is supposed to be devastating in both its irony and originality, what was designed as a cannon goes off like a cap pistol. Speaking through Monsieur Verdoux when the law has at last caught up with him and the guillotine lies ahead, Mr. Chaplin points out that all murderers do not receive the same treatment. His insistence is that the individual who kills a few people is executed for his crimes but that the mass murderers who make wars are respected as patriots. All of which is easy, slick, and shallow, and has less in it than meets the ear in spite of its bogus profundity.

As the mass murderer who at the end is led away to the guillotine, Mr. Chaplin approaches his victims in a variety of roles. He woos them, marries them, and seeks to slay them, disguised as a sea captain, a stuffy engineer, and a dude. These shifts in the character he is playing should protect the film more than they do from the monotony which dogs it and subtracts even from its brilliant moments.

One of the troubles with "Monsieur

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Verdoux" is that it is such a one-man affair. Regardless of what his political convictions may be, Mr. Chaplin is nothing if not a monopolist when it comes to producing a motion picture. On his own lot he makes Pooh-Bah look to his laurels. Mr. Chaplin is not only the film's star; he is its director and producer, too. Moreover, he has composed its musical score, written its scenario, and financed its production.

Disappointing and even dreary as stretches in "Monsieur Verdoux" may be, and poorly put together as it is, the film remains well worth seeing. Why? For Mr. Chaplin's sake. And that is the best of good reasons. As a performer, he is fascinating to watch. All the virtues which the intellectuals of the twenties discovered in his art remain undimmed. He continues to do things again and again in a mediocre film which he and only he would have thought of doing or could do.

Mr. Chaplin thumbing a wad of banknotes; Mr. Chaplin endeavoring in vain to poison the indestructible Martha Raye, and then trying to drown her in a lake in the best traditions of "An American Tragedy"; Mr. Chaplin ducking behind flowers in a hothouse at his last wedding—these are only samples of innumerable sequences which offer fresh proof of how extraordinary are Mr. Chaplin's gifts.

Perhaps it is not surprising that the most enjoyable moments in "Monsieur Verdoux" are those when the new character Mr. Chaplin has elected to play reminds us of the old one he has chosen to abandon. His satanic little dandy, who combines lechery with fastidiousness, may from Mr. Chaplin's standpoint mark a courageous departure. But from ours he is a constant reminder of our loss. The only unforgivable murder for which M. Verdoux is responsible is his liquidation of the diminutive tramp who was Charlie Chaplin. His other crimes may be laughing matters. Doing away with Charlie is a serious business.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Burns: "Tom O'Shanter." 2. Coleridge: "The Ancient Mariner." 3. Field: "Little Boy Blue." 4. Gilbert: "The Mikado." 5. Lanier: "Song of the Chattahoochee." 6. Levy: "Gay But Wistful." 7. Lindsay: "General William Booth Enters Into Heaven." 8. McCord: "The Lacquer Liquor Locker." 9. Poe: "The Bells." 10. Shakespeare: "Midsummer Night's Dream." 11. Stevenson: "Requiem." 12. Swinburne "Nephelidia." 13. Tennyson: "The Princess." 14. Twain: "Punch, Brother, Punch." (Actually by Noah Brook, but attributed to and used by Twain without acknowledgment.) 15. Whittier: "Barbara Frietchie."

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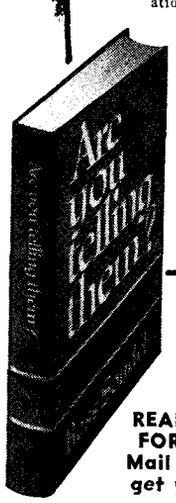

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OUR VICHY GAMBLE

(*Continued from page* 13)

Churchill "the cross of Lorraine" was a heavy burden to bear but he thought that it was expedient to do so and not to complain publicly. The only times Mr. Langer's "dispassion" seems to slip is when he is talking about General de Gaulle. "The lower classes tended to look to de Gaulle, knowing nothing of course of his semi-fascist political and social views." Pétain is quoted as describing him as "a viper that he had warmed in his bosom" and as blaming the British for supporting "the traitor de Gaulle," and these remarks do not appear in any context dealing with the irrationalities of one whom Mr. Langer calls "a pathetic old man." Again, temperamental difficulties with General Giraud, who in North Africa at first insisted on being "commander-in-chief without responsibility to the American and British Combined Chiefs-of-Staff," are viewed less harshly than are some of de Gaulle's idiosyncrasies.

General de Gaulle's occupation of the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon off the coast of Newfoundland was "a cheap parlor trick. He had put the United States in a most embarrassing position and had thereby built up a resentment in official circles that it was almost impossible to overcome." Churchill was much less resentful, almost approving. Non-official circles in the United States applauded. Then when what Mr. Sumner Welles later called "an unfortunately worded communiqué issued by the State Department" referred to the "so-called" Free French movement and invited references to the "so-called" State Department, non-official circles chuckled.

"Our Vichy Gamble" stops abruptly with the assassination of Darlan. Washington apparently did not realize nor does Mr. Langer stress what a lucky break for us that was. Using Darlan temporarily may have been justified. It was a military decision and saved lives. London, not Washington, was first alarmed by the political implications. Churchill telegraphed to President Roosevelt:

> I ought to let you know that very deep currents of feeling are stirred by the arrangement with Darlan. The more I reflect upon it the more convinced I become that it can only be a temporary expedient justifiable solely by the stress of battle. We must not overlook the serious political injury which may be done to our cause, not only in France but throughout Europe, by the feeling that we are ready to make terms with the local quislings. A permanent arrangement with Darlan or the formation of a Darlan government in French North Africa would not be understood by the great masses of ordinary people whose simple loyalties are our strength.

A few hours later Mr. Roosevelt issued a statement which was less forthright but nevertheless reassuring. A little more than a month later an assassin made it certain that no arrangement would be permanent.

Mr. Langer's arbitrary stopping place makes it unnecessary for him to deal with General Giraud, on whom the State Department had placed its bets and had encouraged certain French emigrés in the United States to do likewise. They were left out on a limb when General Giraud had to be withdrawn from the race and General de Gaulle formed a broadly based government which, after liberation came, moved into metropolitan France. Mr. Langer remarks several times that certain events can be properly viewed only "in the sequel." Perhaps that is the case with "Our Vichy Gamble."

Most recent books by Lindsay Rogers, professor of public law at Columbia University, are "Crisis Government" and "Czech Translation."

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Panorama of British Verse

POEMS FROM NEW WRITING 1936-1946. *Selected by John Lehmann. London: John Lehmann, Ltd.* 1946. 189 *pp.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Reviewed by HENRY W. WELLS

THE reader wishing to discover what insight into modern life has been shown by British poets of the last decade can hardly do better than to begin with John Lehmann's anthology, "Poems from New Writing 1936-1946." This volume is a review of the contributions made by a single magazine to recent English poetry. At once a summary and an introduction, it gives a comprehensive panorama of the greater part of an important province of writing.

Among the best known contributors to the magazine, ably edited by Mr. Lehmann, are Stephen Spender, Edith Sitwell, Day Lewis, W. H. Auden, Louis MacNeice, Robert Graves, and George Barker. Tangential movements in contemporary verse are often best illustrated by the explorations of less widely known poets. Vigorous and realistic war verse is written, for example, by Roy Fuller, Lawrence Little, and Alan Ross. A rich vein of light verse is cultivated by William Plomer. Studies in psychiatry yield rewarding lyrics by A. J. S. Tessimond. In metaphysical poetry Peter Yates achieves first rank. Surrealist imagery is successfully used by George Gascoyne and Laurie Lee. An erotic imagery is frequently cultivated by Terence Tiller.

It is pleasant to find poems from the British dominions included in this collection, as witnessed by specimens of that fine Canadian poet Earle Birney, and by the strong work of the no less gifted New Zealanders Allen Curnow and Charles Brasch. The selections are well made, the poems unusually well arranged, and no author is allowed more than his share of the pages. Especially noteworthy is the large number of creditable poems by little known writers, indicating the breadth of England's lyrical renaissance. Among the established poets, one of the happiest signs is the deepening tone in Edith Sitwell's work.

The ultimate question is how well this poetry actually interprets our times. To begin with, it shows that the last few years have shaken England far more deeply than America. These are for the most part profoundly disturbed and tragic poems, with less of the resilience still commonly found in America. Mr. Lehmann as an editor has generally avoided the more sterile excursions of literary egoism, the ultra-romantic and illegitimate exploitations of self. But the poets whom he presents show the difficulty which even the best of modern writers experience in producing deeply satisfying art with social imagination. These men lack a proper audience, a proper philosophical foundation, a sane society as basis for their work. It is hard to find melody in chaos or to detect symbols in the night which Edith Sitwell so eloquently terms the "Cainozoic Age." Yet the social and democratic urge is present; and this thirst in itself holds promise of much fuller gratification in the future.

These poets are explorers; they are spiritual pioneers whose voices deserve close attention from everyone seriously concerned with the spirit of man today. Their problem is at the same time to achieve private and public expression; to attain the sensibility which we demand of the introspective poet and the vision which we ask of the man having imaginative scope. In the integration of which we dream the full development of the individual must also signify the full development of the social man. These poets have gone somewhat further along this road than the Americans. Their trouble is not that they sacrifice either the one to the many or the many to the one. Their weakness lies in the disintegration of the times,

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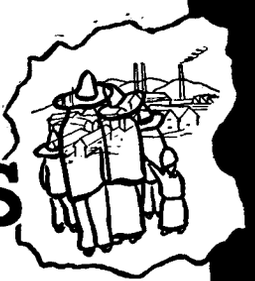

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Dr. Whittemore's Waxworks

HEROES AND HEROINES. By Reed Whittemore. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, Inc. 1946. 80 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by JEAN STARR UNTERMEYER

SHORTLY after leaving college," reads the jacket on Mr. Whittemore's book, "he found himself in the Army, and in the next four years, 'erratically exciting years,' made a grand tour which took him from basic training camps and officers' school in the United States to Scotland, England, Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily, Italy, Corsica, France, and back to the United States, where he was discharged."

It is a little surprising then to find this student of history turning away from history-in-the-making to "made" history. He makes the modest confession of his tastes in poems like "The Collector."

All the best recordings
Of youth and love, the open heart,
Cunning and anger and the old remorse
In perfect order line his shelves.
The least occasion serves.
Then from those serried works he draws
Timely tunes for sympathetic ears.

With quiet wit this poet strips of their traditional glamor his heroes and heroines, found by him in novels, in poems, in the headlines of newspapers, and in detective stories. With a great deal of technical surety, in verses often reminiscent of Auden (whose inner tension, in contradistinction to his numerous followers, equals the outer tension of his techniques), Mr. Whittemore's irony presents his characters without the illusions they may have held for many of us. Sherlock Holmes turns Watson from an accomplice into a culprit; the Rover Boys, who never roved into my life, ramble through an interview, the prototype of all stuffed shirts everywhere; and Tess of the D'Urbervilles, who drew out youthful tears, becomes in every sense a lay figure, a marionette rather than a martyr. This irony reaches its most effective expression in "Gulliver," for here passion lifts it from a passive commentary into a hard lamentation.

Tossed from the large to the small, poor Lem,
And ten times ten back again
Still, he observed, men were men.
Worse was yet to come.

Charmed upwards by a visionary scheme
And down, down to its application,
He smelled, quite, the state of the Nation.
Worse was yet to come.

Driven on men brutes by name
He saw loose the same strange rage
That London's chastened tempers caged.
Worse was yet to come.

Cast at last with his own at home.
He saw the men that men were not
Beastly proud of their blasted lot.
The worst was come.

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THREE SHORT NOVELS

Belated Fling

THE LAST LEAF. By Peggy Munsterberg. New York: The Dial Press. 1947. 253 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by GRACE FRANK

MARTHA PEALE, a middle-aged spinster, had been held back all her life by her mother, by Sara, her mother's servant, and finally, when freedom came, by the fact that she was then too old to escape from the sense of dependence that these ties had forced upon her. For a brief period after her mother's death she did try to assert herself. She ventured to dismiss old Sara, to rearrange the furniture, and even to engage a manservant.

But independence came too late for Martha. Her early suitors had married; work on the history of her ancestors which had occupied her for many years began to pall; and the friendship with a young girl which briefly promised rejuvenation ended in disaster. Martha Peale entered old age with the feeling that she had never lived and that all her potentialities had perished before they could be exploited.

Something of the sterility of a decaying New England is mirrored in this novel. Martha, the last leaf upon her family's tree, is held by the past, shriveled and useless. As she watches over her disreputable old uncle in his final illness, she cannot decide whether it is his death or her own that she is waiting for. And in the end she returns to old Sara and to the house of her forbears, futilely tethered to their codes and traditions.

The author knows well the bleakness of the life and persons she chronicles and the changing moods of the lovely Rhode Island landscape that surrounds them. She writes well, and many a perceptive observation enriches her story. That the story itself is one of frustration, disturbingly unpleasant at times, does not obviate the fact that it is ably presented.

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(Continued from page 8)

States, England, and Russia, as well as a certain number of other nations. The more clearly the operation of these agencies is defined by their charter, the less need there will be for more or less arbitrary political decisions later. Countries which have political systems as different as the United States, England, and Russia, cannot be expected to delegate in the foreseeable future vast law-making powers to any international body; it is easier for them to agree on what the laws should be than to agree on how the laws should be made.

The agencies which I have contemplated would operate on a budget of about twenty billion dollars per year.

They might move, in the next twenty years, in amounts of two to four billion dollars per year, farm products from the United States to densely populated industrial countries which are unsuitable for agriculture, such as, for instance, England, Germany, and Belgium.

They might undertake the building up of a vast consumers goods industry in a number of countries including Russia.

They might lessen the economic insecurity of nations exposed to the repercussions of booms and depressions that hit the United States. They might do this by purchasing large quantities of raw materials from these nations when importation of these materials into this country is at a low ebb during depressions and by selling these materials from stock to importers in the United States during booms.

They might tend to stabilize economic conditions in the United States by keeping the exports of the United States at a high level during depressions and at somewhat lower levels during boom periods.

They might provide for the supervision of general disarmament and for effective control of atomic energy installations all over the world.

They might provide for redistribution of strategic raw materials and other scarce raw materials which otherwise might be monopolized by certain nations; but they need not go quite as far in this respect as in the case of uranium and thorium.

They might enforce peace by maintaining an armed force strong enough to be able to restrain from illegal action most of the nations but not strong enough to coerce the United States or Russia.

All these functions so far mentioned relate to the redistribution of goods and services, and to security, but there is need for agencies which would serve a different purpose. The value of such agencies ought to be judged by asking how they would affect our lives, and by affecting our lives, affect our loyalties. For unless we can bring about a rapid shift in our present pattern of loyalties, a stable world community will not become a reality fast enough.

In America a man born in the state of New York may go to study at Harvard in Massachusetts, and may, if he chooses to do so, settle in California. Few men born in New York state will actually do this, but the fact that all of them are free to do so makes them look upon other states as potential places of study and potential places of residence, rather than potential battlefields. Can we bring about a similar situation in the world without opening the door to large-scale migration and can we, by doing so, materially change the present pattern of loyalties?

Many of the men who influence public opinion by speaking or writing come from a small class of people—the class of people who have had the advantages of higher education. Their attitudes and their loyalties will, in the long run, affect the set of values accepted throughout the whole community.

An agency in charge of student migration might be given the right to place say up to twenty per cent of "foreign" students in the colleges of any one country and to pay for their tuition and living expenses. Moreover, twenty per cent of the "foreign" students who graduate in any one country could be given the right to settle in that country, if they chose to do so.

In the United States, we have at present an inflated student body of about two million college students. According to this scheme, up to four hundred thousand could be "foreign-

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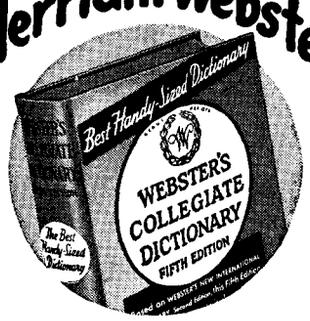

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ers." Since students spend an average of four years in college this means that every year one hundred thousand "foreign" students would enter the United States and out of these about twenty thousand might decide to stay permanently in the United States. This is well within the limits set by the immigration laws, but new legislation would be required in some other countries before they could participate on equal terms.

If such a scheme were in operation, the total numbers of persons involved in this migration would be small, but every high-school student in the world would look upon the United States and other major countries as potential places of study. Only a small fraction of the "foreign" students graduating in the United States might finally decide to stay here for good; most of them would not make up their minds about this until they had actually graduated and had seen what positions were open to them. But in the meantime all those who were studying here in the United States would look upon this country as their home—at least potentially.

Assuming that every one of these "foreign" students received in the United States an allowance of $2,000 per year, all of them together would cost $800,000,000 per year. This amount would come out of the general contributions of the United States towards the budget of the world agencies. Similarly, American students in England and Russia would receive yearly allowances paid from the English and the Russian contributions. Many American students might be induced to go abroad under this scheme where they could study free, rather than stay at home where no one would take care of their living expenses and tuition.

Another agency might be given the task of giving access to "information" to everyone everywhere in the world. This agency might be given jurisdiction over one page of every newspaper in the world. The agency could either function as the "editor" of that page or it could suitably assign the pages under its jurisdiction to other newspapers. Thus for instance, a page in the *Chicago Tribune* might be assigned to the London *Times*, and a page in the London *Times* to the *Chicago Tribune*. A page in *The New York Times* might be assigned to *Pravda*, and a page in *Pravda* to *The New York Times*. It is difficult to forecast at the present time who would oppose such a scheme most vigorously, the "publisher" of *Pravda*, or the publisher of The *New York Times*.

Some of these agencies would be more acceptable to the Russians than others; but a world community cannot be built by reaching agreements piecemeal, and the whole pattern of agencies, properly balanced, would have to form a single package, which provides for at least the first steps towards a universal bill of rights. Just when and in what circumstances such a package might be acceptable to Russia is a crucial question which requires careful consideration. Something more will be said about this later.

THE obstacles to plans of this sort are obviously great but they can be kept within the realms of practical possibilities if we clearly recognize the limitations which we have to accept.

We cannot give to such agencies the responsibility of maintaining full employment throughout the world, because the United States is split internally on the methods which might be acceptable to her for achieving this end.

We must not expect to cope in the next twenty-five years with raising the standard of living everywhere in the world, for the high birth-rate of India and China makes it impossible to attack this problem on a world-wide scale through purely economic methods.

And finally, in view of the present pattern of loyalties it does not seem advisable to delegate to such agencies the right of opening the door for large-scale migration by removing immigration barriers.

There are a number of international agencies in existence today but the most important ones are those arising out of the Bretton Woods agreement and they contain little that is adaptable to the specific problems confronting Russia. It might be possible to create new agencies and to increase the scale of operation of the old ones. But to me it seems very likely that if progress were attempted on such a piecemeal basis and without having put the problem before the American

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people such an attempt would be defeated.

To me it seems futile to hope that 140 million people of this country can be smuggled through the gates of Paradise while most of them are looking the other way. Only a full understanding of what is being attempted would have some chance of success, small though that chance may be. The problem which faces the world today can be solved only by the initiative of the American people. And it can be solved by them only if they understand their own position in the world and if they give their Government a clear mandate to take the leadership for the creation of a world community. The first step in this direction is to put the problem squarely before the people and to put the emphasis where it belongs.

The American people are faced with a crucial decision. This decision is not so much what amount of national sovereignty we are willing to give up. Undoubtedly, more and more sovereignty will have to be given up as time goes on. But the main issue is not the the issue of sovereignty. The main issue is whether we are willing to base our national policy on those higher loyalties which exist in the hearts and minds of the individuals who form the population of this country, but which do not as yet find expression in our national policy. The main issue is whether we are willing to assume our full share of the responsibility in the creation of a world community.

If we are willing to do this we should be willing to mobilize our material resources for this purpose on an adequate scale. We should think of our contributions for the next twenty years as amounts reaching up to ten per cent of our national income, *i.e.*, about fifteen billion dollars per year. Fifteen billion dollars, if spent for this purpose, would, of course, mean a surplus export of approximately the same amount. This could easily double and treble the rate at which industrialization proceeds in the world outside of the United States.

We are quite willing to spend at present about ten per cent of our national income for the Army and Navy. Unless we are very fortunate, we may have to continue to spend in one form or another such sums for defense for the next five or ten years, and our contribution towards building up a world community would then be an additional burden on our economy. Even so, once reconversion to peacetime production is completed we could assume such a burden without any reduction in our standard of living. For at this particular juncture we have a unique opportunity. Sixty per cent of our manpower was tied up in war production up to a short while ago. Assuming that we could maintain a high level of employment, we could expect an *enormous* increase in our standard of living. We could take on our share of the burden and still have an *appreciable* increase in our standard of living, and, moreover, a somewhat better chance of actually maintaining a high level of employment.

It would be difficult for us to have an export surplus of fifteen billion dollars in boom years, and this should not be expected from us. Our export surplus in boom years could be kept smaller, say seven to ten billion, and only as we move towards a depression would it reach the peak of fifteen billion.

The question of financing the contribution of the United States would be up to our Government. It might, for instance, decide to rely on taxes during the boom and on the issuing of "Peace Bonds" during the depression. In the next twenty years during which this scheme would operate we may expect an increase in the public debt, but there is no reason why the total increase during this long period should be larger than the public debt incurred during the few years of the war, which was a much shorter period.

Let us not attempt to maintain the illusion that the rest of the world can repay us at any time in the form of material goods. The productive capacity of this country is enormous. If a high level of employment can be maintained, our standard of living will rise rapidly and the working hours will fall rapidly to the point where the problem of disposing of leisure might come to the foreground of public attention. There will be no need and no occasion, unless time should go into reverse, for our asking or receiving repayment in goods.

This does not mean that the countries which may receive help in the next ten, fifteen, or twenty years shall receive gifts without assuming obligations. These countries would have precisely the same obligations as the United States to contribute to the development of the world—up to ten per cent of their national income. Their actual contributions ought to be determined by objective needs and on the basis of available resources. On this basis, however, most of these countries would probably be free

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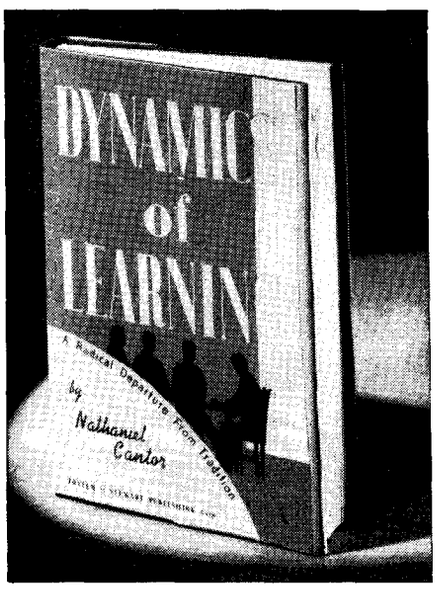

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from any but rather small contributions for a number of years. Gradually, more and more of them would be able to take on their share of the burden; and twenty years from now the productive capacity of Russia might very well be drawn upon in the early phases of the industrialization of China and India.

There is little reason for expecting any of the countries which would receive help to display gratitude. Nor is there much reason for looking upon our own contribution as anything but evidence that at last we have made up our minds to do our duty by the world. Raising the standard of living in certain countries or throughout the world in general will not in itself make the world more peaceful. A higher standard of living does not automatically promote or favor higher loyalties. But such higher loyalties will be developed if the world agencies affect the life of the individual, and by affecting his life, affect his loyalties. And above all, the very fact that the people of this country have voluntarily assumed their share of responsibility would be regarded everywhere as a token of our facing not towards war but towards peace.

Within such a framework Russia might receive on the basis of objective needs and available resources perhaps five billion dollars per year. No sane person can believe that we are solely concerned about winning the next war if we are spending a substantial fraction of our national income for the welfare of these countries who would most likely be our enemies in case of war. In such circumstances we might even maintain a considerable military establishment and continue to spend billions of dollars for defense, and yet find that other nations consider such action on our part as foolish and extravagant behavior rather than a threat to their security.

All this presupposes, of course, that we are really making the building up of a world community the cornerstone of our national policy and that the world can count on the continuity of such a policy. This probably cannot be achieved without amending the Constitution. The Constitution was twice amended in this century over the issue of prohibition and if we were willing to go out of our way for the sake of being permitted to drink or for the sake of preventing others from drinking, maybe we will be willing to go out of our way for the sake of remaining alive.

The suggestion that this country should commit herself to contributions up to ten per cent of her national income sounds perhaps Utopian. Perhaps it will be asked, why not be satisfied with making progress as fast as we can? Why not propose large-scale loans which the United States might make directly or through the medium of international agencies?

To me it seems that this more modest objective would be neither adequate for the purpose, nor very much easier to achieve. Certainly we could make loans to other nations on a large scale and actually receive repayment in goods if we were willing to make this possible by our tariff policy. But we are not willing to do this either.

THE point I am trying to make is this: nothing much can be achieved now or in the very near future until such time as the people of this country understand what is at stake.

So far as the bomb is concerned, the people have not been told the whole story, nor have they fully understood what they have been told. What we need in this country now is a crusade for an organized world community—a crusade that will give a mandate to the Government to take the leadership. There will be elections in '48 and again in '52. The issue before us is not a partisan issue. Atomic bombs are not precision instruments, they will not discriminate between Republicans and Democrats. Most elections are pretty close, and a rather small fraction of the voters who are willing to disregard everything else and to cast their vote solely on the issue of establishing peace by creating a world community, could decisively influence the nominations and elections in many of the states.

Today, if the Government were to approach Russia, she would hardly be willing to go along and do all that needs to be done. But suppose that a crusade should really get under way here in America. Clearly, there would be a fight—a very big fight. Other nations would sit up and take notice. And if at last the fight should be won and a President who has seen the light should approach the other nations with the backing of the people and Congress, then I believe we would have a very different situation, and Russia might go along with us.

Because there will be a fight, we can win something that has roots and permanence. Because there will be a fight, the American people will look and listen. And when the people of this country at last understand their own position in the world, they might be willing to do what is necessary.

Obviously the odds are heavily against us, but we may have one chance in ten of reaching safely the haven of permanent peace; and maybe God will work a miracle—if we don't make it too difficult for Him.

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Joy and Love

THE HEARTH LIT. By Joseph Joel Keith. La Porte, Ind.: The Dierkes Press. 1946. 67 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by GERARD PREVIN MEYER

THIS volume of poems, Mr. Keith's third, was chosen, to quote the dust-wrapper, "from more than 300 manuscripts as the winner of the Third Annual Book Publication Contest held by the Dierkes Press," and appears with a foreword by David Morton, who says, among other things, "Joy and love . . . are consistently present in Joel Keith's poems. . . . The poems, themselves, have . . . the magical union of sound and hush that is lyricism at its most subtle best."

It is easy to understand Mr. Morton's enthusiasm for these poems, since they suggest the same interests and virtues as his own: "sound and hush" is not a bad epitome of their quality. Unfortunately, this kind of poetry is essentially static: nothing much happens, and the sound itself is so close to a hush that only ears specially attuned to it will hear it—such as are deafened or at least frightened by the thunder of our times, or by the tragedy and complexity of life in any age.

For nature, to Mr. Keith, is seldom wild: rather, it is compact of moments that are small and satisfying, of creatures that are small and to be treated tenderly. That goes for human creatures, too: he is happiest when writing about boys—not the "dead-end" kid, nor the raggle-taggle Huck Finn type either, but the kind of boy that "comes, a heart-song on his lips." The mood is peace, and a gentle humanitarianism.

The imaginative range, inevitably, is narrow. Certain words recur so often as to suggest the needle wearing down the groove: "sweet" or a derivative no less than eighteen times, "soft" or a correlative ten times, "silent" or the equivalent eight times, words of sleep about as often, words for "going home" ten times. "The Hearth Lit," in fact, is obsessed by sweetness, softness, stillness, sleep, going home.

If this is joy, it is a peculiarly cloistered, somnolent sort of joy; if love, it conveys little of the passion or ecstasy of love sacred or profane. Though these poems are lyric, the constant recurrence of the same words and themes surely denies them the epithet "subtle"—there is nothing subtle about the use of repetition for effect, particularly when it is carried to an extreme. All this is not to refuse Mr. Keith his moments of achievement—in their genre.

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STRAVINSKY—THE ENIGMA

AMONG the eminent foreign composers residing in our midst and immeasurably enriching our musical life even though few of them become identified with the American scene, none is more enigmatic than Stravinsky. Unless one is thoroughly acquainted with the development of music in the twentieth century and is familiar with a good deal of its literature, it is almost impossible to fathom the art of the man who rocked the world with the barbaric vigor and boldness of his earlier works. But in recent times the Russian composer has shown no sign of his erstwhile vigor, turning out such shallow pieces as "Jeu de Cartes" or "Four Norwegian Moods."

Stravinsky began his career at the age of twenty as a discovery of Rimsky-Korsakov. There was no sign in the young composer's earliest works of the future revolutionary: he himself apparently was satisfied to be considered an appendage of the famous nationalist group of the "Five," a sort of Gallicized Borodin or Glazunov. Yet, from the very beginning, Musorgsky's man-centered art was not his; rhythm and motion, dynamics and mechanics were his fare. An incredible versatility and inventiveness were allied with a cold and ruthless will power. He always knew what he was doing and why, and he was well aware of his ability to remake the construction and logic of the language of music any time he chose. But at first the frame was missing; there were none of those ideas that engender forms, and he did not have an axis around which his new ideas could revolve in order to be realized. Then his meeting with Diaghilev and his ballet suddenly offered the solution: the musical stage, with its decor, the virtuosity of dancers, the sorcery of the art of motion, ballet and pantomime rhythms. He had finally discovered the marionettes to whom he could dictate the rhythm and from whom in turn he could espy the secrets of mass motion and the machine-like functioning of the muscles. Stravinsky found himself instantly, and the works of this period, "L'Oiseau de Feu," "Petroushka," and "Le Sacré du Printemps" (1910-13), mythological fairy tales on wings from the vast storehouse of Russian folklore, set the musical world on fire. Such music as poured out of Stravinsky's orchestra had never before been heard. Blinding flashes of light, heathen ritual dances, sizzling rhythms cavorting, the groups of instruments clashing with blind fury, a barbaric orgy of colors, gestures, and accents, the whole resembling a boiling cauldron the lid of which is teetering as steam escapes from all sides. And yet, this new and terrible tone, announcing with its dark rumblings the coming of unknown horrors to an unsuspecting world, emanates from a frostily rigid orchestra the thousand cogs of which, notwithstanding the apparent confusion, operate like the well-machined parts of an engine. Audiences paled and critics pronounced the death of impressionism. Young musicians the world over, tired of the gauze-like consistency, the floating tinsel, rouge, and beauty spots of declining impressionism, as they were of the overstuffed splendor of post-Romanticism, at once acclaimed Stravinsky as the savior, the apostle of new music. His fame and the polemics raging around him were enhanced by such subsequent works as "Renard," "Histoire du Soldat," and "Les Noces."

AND then something happened. This Sarmatian giant who trampled over the fragile cobwebs of Western music, who used his fists instead of his finger tips, who was utterly indifferent to anything that Western music could offer, suddenly threw away his bearskin and his club, put on the best Parisian garments and, reaching for a Panama hat and a Malacca cane, declared himself to be a Western European dandy. Now he tries everything from American jazz to pseudo-baroque concerto, making exotic excursions into the delicate atmosphere of Pergolesi, neo-classic (and neo-Latin) oratorio, and even daring the transparent and exposed showcase of the string quartet. Just what caused this sudden about-face is hard to tell, but its consequences were not less incredible than the consequences of his first arrival in enervated Paris, when his haymakers roused the musical dead. The new trend of Western European neo-classicism, the typical symptom of a tired and overcultivated civilization led by an Easterner! "Oedipus Rex" and the "Symphony

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of Psalms" as well as a number of other works are still impressive, but after that Stravinsky ceased to be a significant composer.

This spirit was undoubtedly rooted in Russia, in the folk music of that immense country, and, all his protestations notwithstanding, the flame left Stravinsky's soul when he turned away from his patrimony. Stravinsky is undoubtedly first and foremost a composer for the musical stage; it is in his blood, and it was this blood that made him select those elements from Russian folk music that lend themselves to illustrative, spectacularly mobile exhibition, at the same time offering well-defined formal patterns. An artist with such a disposition cannot grasp in folk music that which is most profound and elemental, but with the aid of his wonderful musical imagination Stravinsky turned his folkloristic experiences into colorful, interesting, and wholly original works.

With musical qualities he was abundantly endowed. Possessed of a vitality, a musical potency, an unrivaled orchestral fantasy, a wonderful sense for the theatre, an extraordinary feeling for rhythm and dynamics, boldness, courage, and a sheer zest and joy in making music, he was at the same time entirely lacking in self-consciousness and inhibitions until his conversion took place. The man who was the originator and leader of the "activistic-dynamic-barbaric" school is now engaged in the composition of wonderfully well-made "objective" trifles. The grotesque and demonic tone that characterized his earlier works has given place to a tame, impersonal idiom which hurts with its polite commonplaces and which is entirely lacking in conviction. Looking back on Stravinsky's career it seems now that both his critics and his detractors failed to evaluate him correctly. Those who saw in him the great liberator of human powers were as mistaken as those who pronounced him a musical nihilist who lowered music to the status of an automaton. He was a bit of both but failed by a long margin. The composer of the "Sacre" was a superbly gifted musician who sought occasion and frame for the expression of his spontaneous musical instinct. Filled with a desire for the new, and brimming with creative enthusiasm, he never rested until he achieved what he wanted. But he did not want to liberate mankind because he was not interested in man. Nor would his eminent talents permit him to "degrade" music to a mere motor. There is no work of his, no matter how cool or "disinterested," from which a musician could not learn something. A strange art and life are his and his lack of orientation, or rather aimlessness, that characterize his post-Russian phase are a great loss to all of us. An artist so deeply attached to the genius of his homeland should never leave its inspiring boundaries. His spirit will desert him in his strange surroundings and then he will become the bearer of the weightiest of burdens, an empty soul.

PAUL HENRY LANG.

Preflight for Icarus

By Lysbeth Boyd Borie

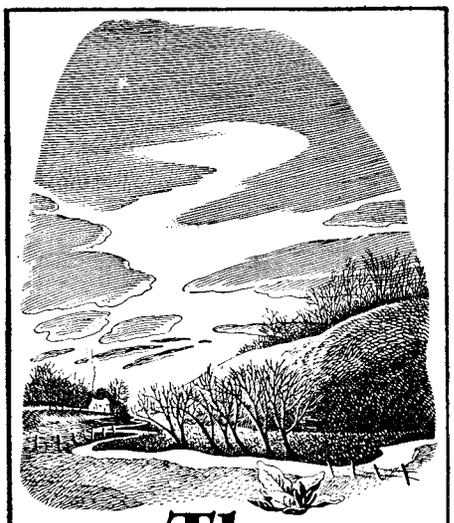
SAMPLE the infinite.
Draw in the morning sky
Deep as the lungs will hold.
This draught must last till you are old.
This is the best of life
Not the beginning.

Wing clear, wing proud.
Wind up a ribbon of the sky.
Collect a star.
These are the hoarded hours that are.
Tomorrow is beyond a further cloud.

Spread your bright wings.
Even you young and silvered
Gods of Space
Must make a landing, one day,
On the commonplace.

Soar your brave wings.
Like Icarus you, too, may come
One shining day
Too close against a rising sun.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The above poem when first published was incorrectly credited to Lloyd Frankenberg.*



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BRITTEN—MASTER OF MELODIC LINE

FOR those whose curiosity has been growing as to what this man Benjamin Britten might sound like—after the sensation made by his opera "Peter Grimes"—the two imported albums above will be of absorbing interest. There is no question that in Britten England has a really first-rate composer according to today's standards, and moreover a man who writes, at last, economically, prudently, restoring the value of a single tone to the higher estate it enjoyed in earlier times, before it was the style to spew forth a million notes where a hundred could say as much. (Where, incidentally, is the value of a note more vital than on records? Whose currency is worth the most per note, per inch—Mozart's or Shostakovitch's?)

Britten's music shows anew the great difference in outlook between British and American composers—even allowing for the divergence of thought hereabouts. Too much contemporary English music is merely sweet, over-cloyed; the best of it is not so much forward looking as nostalgic, dwelling on a thousand years of the past, on the timeless British folk music and the music of religion. Could there be, possibly, a political analogy here? American music is full of characteristic energy. Occasionally it is raw, untimed, clumsy, ill-constructed, often it is skilful yet savage; almost always it is factual and wideawake. British music falls easily into the mystical, sometimes the sentimental. Good or bad, it is seldom physically harsh, rarely untutored. American music, again, is largely uncontrapuntal, blatantly unvocal. British music is the essence of counterpoint and there is no composer of pure vocal line like the Englishman nor any who better understands the setting of speech to its own music.

Britten, then, of the English school, is dissonant but never harsh. His style is less pretentious, more square than Vaughan Williams's but not unrelated to his; there are strengthening elements of Hindemith-like fourths. Britten is a master of simple melodic line. His settings of the English language itself—some of its most gorgeous examples—are the work of genius if there is genius today. Every teacher of English with a spark of music in his poetry should study them. Britten, like many Britons, uses modal melody but unlike his older contemporaries he is not preoccupied with folk song material. He is particularly fond of the half-step effect of the Phrygian mode (white note scale from E to E). He uses the chordal notes of the harmonic series, the dominant thirteenth, melodically—a fine effect, notably in the horn, which is perfectly suited to it.

This music is not "difficult" in the American contemporary sense because it is seldom ungraceful to the ear; but it is not easy, because it has little outward show. So much the better. The strange and beautiful singing of Peter Pears, the fabulous horn playing of Dennis Brain, the urgent collaboration of England's greatest poets, make the Britten Serenade, backed by the collateral Rondo and Mazurka, a memorable musical experience.

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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the Phoenix Nest

THE PHOENIX

THE single Phoenix burning on its pyre
Into the brightening life that never dies
Through dared mortality springs up entire,
Dazzled forever by a bright surprise.

O, after all, this is a starry strife
That wastes the night till upward bursts the sun.
We wrestle angels at the fords of life:
It is inaction dies, while life burns on.

HARRY KEMP.

* * *

This department greatly admires "Not So Wild a Dream" (Knopf) by Eric Sevareid. It is one of the most honest volumes I have ever read. In it he speaks of "Scotty" (James B.) Reston and his book "Prelude to Victory" written while the U. S. was still wobbling into the war. "It was perhaps the finest statement of our troubles and the issues written throughout the war. Few read it." Why wasn't it made *must* reading for every "inductee," to clear up some of their bewilderments? What I like about Sevareid is his being so thoroughly an American. One of his sideswipes, incidentally, is rather timely:

> In a dozen Allied countries liberal and progressive thinkers bled in Gestapo jails and died of unmentionable tortures because they wanted to remake the world in the people's name, and in Washington kid lawyers of the FBI, lately out of Delta Upsilon, gumshoed about in Federal agencies hunting for "subversive elements" — frequently defined as anybody who wrote for *The New Republic*, or had supported the Republican cause in martyred Spain, or had entertained Negroes in his home.

It still goes on; even though the United States of America was not actually "morally bankrupt" then, and is not now. Sevareid saw the Nazis and the Fascists realistically, when the nation was half asleep. Now, today, official circles seem full of hysteria, though I don't think for a minute that the country as a whole is hysterical. Nor do I think that the Soviet Union is any angel. The very nature of the communist doctrine makes it just as necessary for them to convert the whole world to their way of thinking as it was for the Society of Jesus to save souls back in the Middle Ages, sometimes through the Inquisition. But that is no reason for the United States Government to set up an Inquisition of its own! However, one good thing has come out of it all. The facts and issues are more and more in the open. A recent article in *The New York Times Magazine* (March 30) called "Report on the Communist Party (U. S. A.)" seemed to me admirably fair, giving both sides. Also, on April 1, on the editorial page of *The New York Times*, I commend to your attention (strangely enough, for I have not often agreed with Mr. Arthur Krock) a column by Arthur Krock called "The Greek Government Is a Difficult Client," which contains an exceptionally clear statement from an American observer Mr. Krock says has "impressively established his reliability, disinterestedness, and capacity to report objectively," of just how corrupt the present Greek government is, and of its actions as a "police state." This observer avers "that any stability is simply unobtainable under the present government." Now the clamor for the Truman doctrine and against the Truman doctrine has been heated. But that we should give succor and military aid, *not* to the Greek people, but to such a totally undemocratic government as is described by the observer mentioned above, seems to me utterly un-American. More and more it appears that, in his appeal, Mr. Truman acted with more sense of drama than common sense. There is a real and disturbing pressure being applied by the Soviet Union to the Middle East. That is obvious fact. But in resisting that pressure, the United States need not support manifest governmental reaction and corruption in Greece. Such a tendency is what outrages those who, like the present writer, are neither Communists nor "fellow travelers," and do not like a "police state" in Soviet Russia or anywhere else.

* * *

Off the beam of old books? Well, I wish to ask us Americans just why we have been neglecting for so many years one of the most delightful books I have read lately, though formerly I knew the author only as a poet. It is "The Belted Seas," by the late Arthur Colton, and it cost twenty cents (for an almost mint condition copy) over on Fourth Avenue. I now am out to get Mr. Colton's "Port Argent" and "Tioba," both of which drew a good press when published, which was prior to the date of "The Belted Seas," (1905: Henry Holt & Co.). To think that in March of that year I was a freshman in the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale, and Mr. Colton was an old Yale man, and I did *not* purchase "The Belted Seas"! Today, in my old age, I worship the book! And in any anthology concerning the whale, I should enshrine Chapter VII concerning "Liebchen" and Kreps, the Professor of Allereiwissenschaft, only one of the gems in a picaresque novel of priceless quiet humor. Beautiful! Beautiful! Set the book up beside "Under the Jackstaff," by Chester Bailey Fernald, "Gentlemen All and Merry Companions," by Ralph Bergengren. "Viva Mexico," by Charles Macomb Flandrau, and his "Harvard Episodes," and all the other choice Malaga grapes of American literature! No, you will not find Colton in "Twentieth Century Authors." He is unknown to the sons of Levi and Korah's congregation. But ah, the Green Dragon Pagoda; ah, the Hotel Helen Mar; ah, the Flannagan and Imperial; ah, King J. R.; ah, marvelous Monson, superlative Madame Bill; ah, Kamelillo that incomparable Kanaka! Ah, book of gold!

* * *

Frank J. Skoff does not believe that George Bernard Shaw wrote about the codfish, and submits as follows:

> In a long ago Phoenix Nest, the following verse was published (submitted by Jane D. Wise of New Rochelle, N. Y.):
>
> The codfish lays a million eggs
> While the helpful hen lays one,

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But the codfish never cackles
To tell the deed she's done,
And so the codfish coy we scorn
While the helpful hen we prize
Which indicates to thoughtful minds
It pays to advertise.

The author was unknown and Anon was given the credit.

In The Phoenix Nest for Jan. 5, 1946, Carlton M. Starr of Chicago ascribed the verse to G. B. Shaw and cited "The Open Book," a pamphlet published by the World Syndicate Publishing Co. (now known as the World Publishing Co.), as his authority for the assertion.

I wrote the World Publishing Co. and was informed that the verse was published in the February 1940 issue of "The Open Book" as a contribution of J. M. Trittenbach of Chicago, Ill. No further information could be given as all the old correspondence had been destroyed. I found Mr. Trittenbach's address in the Chicago phone directory and wrote him for information. He replied that he submitted the item as author unknown and was surprised to see the editor give G. B. Shaw credit for it, but "didn't take time out to question it." He also added that he "had used the item four or five years previously in a house organ" he edited "for a manufacturer doing business with lumber yards throughout the territory from Colorado to the Middle Atlantic States with the caption 'author unknown' and no suggestion was ever received as to identity of author."

I am writing a thesis on George Bernard Shaw, and could use this bit of verse in it were I certain Shaw wrote it. I have read all the standard works of Shaw in the Ayot St. Lawrence edition plus other writings, but I never ran across this item. It is quite possible that Shaw might have sent it to a newspaper or some obscure magazine. Since Mr. Trittenbach used this verse five years ago without any reader reaction as to the real author, I am inclined to doubt that Shaw actually wrote it. Furthermore, you apparently did not receive from readers other than Starr any corroboration of Shaw as the real author. If you would comment on this problem, possibly a final solution to the mystery might be discovered. At present the evidence seems to be all in favor of Anon, not G. B. S.

* * *

PET HATE DEPARTMENT

I daily grow more and more bitter
And greet with my dismalest moan
The author who'll tell me exactly
what's right
By quoting from works of his own!

VIRGINIA SCOTT MINER.

* * *

Be seeing you at the Maypole!

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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(Continued on page 42)

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PERSONALS

(Continued from page 41)

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YOUNG WOMAN, college graduate, 5 years' publishing experience wishes editorial or writing job. Traveling preferred. Box 519-T.

SECRETARY, experienced stenographer, typist. Interested publishing field. 5 afternoons, 1-5. N.Y.C. Box 520-T.

AUTHOR NEED steady typist? Am young, aspiring scribbler, male. Box 324-T.

TEACHER—WOMAN, 28, desires interesting summer employment, prefer research work, excellent literary background and good typist. Box 521-T.

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Reg. U. S. Patent Office

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

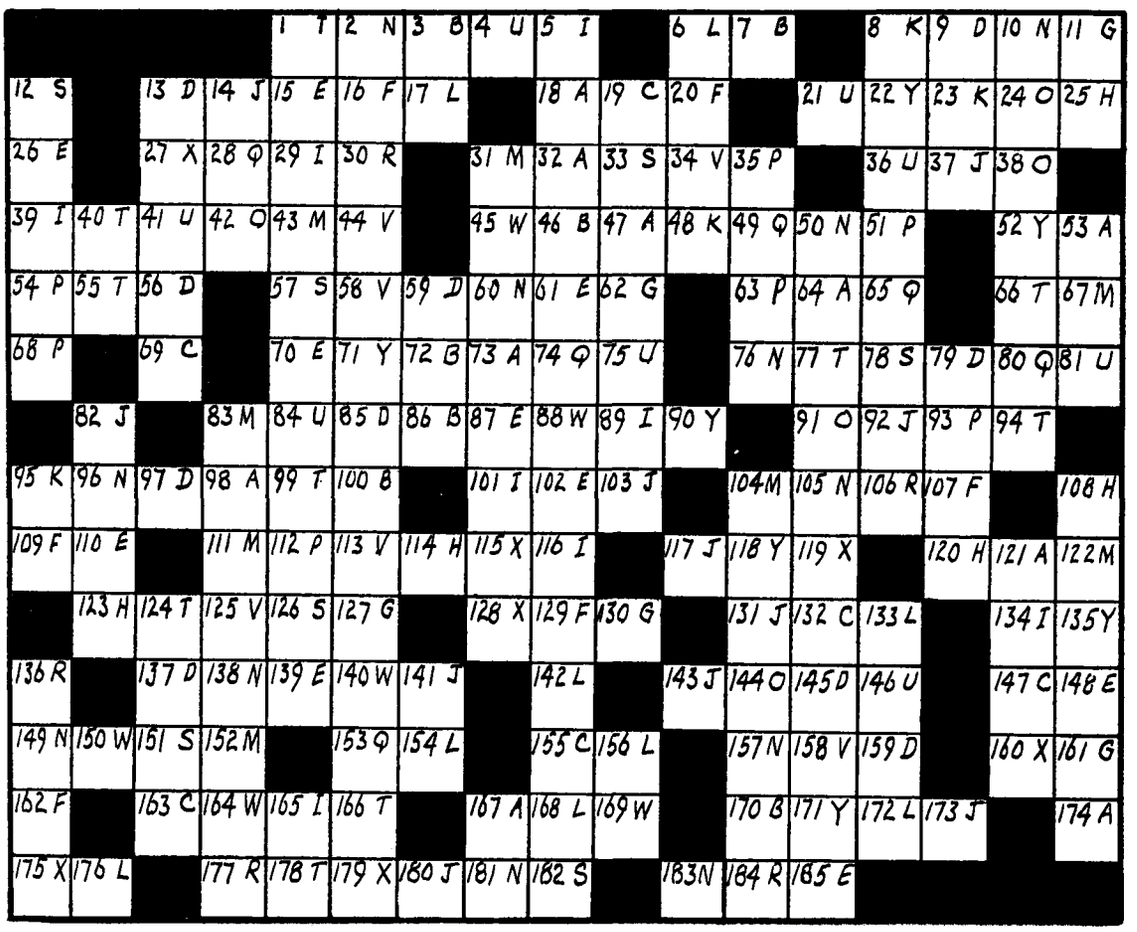
DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. Grandfather of Manasseh and Ephraim (Bib.).	73 121 18 47 98 174 32 64 167 53
B. Persian god of the light of the middle zone between heaven and hell.	72 86 7 170 46 3 100
C. Any of various fermented liquors from maize or cane sugar in S.A. (Sp.).	147 19 155 163 132 69
D. Moved in any direction toward an object or purpose.	13 79 9 85 59 137 97 159 56 145
E. Appliances to be set under the legs of a piano.	139 87 26 102 61 148 110 185 15 70
F. A short line to fasten nets or hooks (Fishing).	129 109 162 107 20 16
G. Manufacturing city on the Aire, Yorkshire, England.	11 161 127 130 62
H. One related on the mother's side.	25 108 123 120 114
I. Historic spot of Revolutionary War in Virginia.	116 134 29 165 89 101 39 5
J. Popular donkey trail along a creek of the Grand Canyon (2 wds.).	117 103 14 180 92 131 82 37 141 173 143
K. Serenity; tranquillity; relaxation.	48 23 95 8
L. A native or inhabitant of Antwerp (Fr.).	142 168 172 133 176 156 154 6 17
M. Not made familiar by practice, custom, or the like.	67 31 111 122 43 152 104 83

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
N. On the spot; at that very instant (3 wds.).	76 138 2 149 60 105 50 183 96 157 10 181
O. Russian resort of World War II conference.	38 42 24 91 144
P. A gem reflecting light in six rays, perhaps the star sapphire (Gr. Antiq.).	63 51 68 54 35 112 93
Q. To strengthen or increase the alcoholic content of (Colloq.).	49 65 28 153 74 80
R. Author of "Captain Singleton" (1720).	106 30 177 184 136
S. In a public or open manner.	151 33 78 182 57 126 12
T. Cheery; gay; merry.	66 1 178 94 77 99 55 40 124 166
U. An outlet, canal, or duct.	75 41 84 21 81 36 4 146
V. Not thickly grown, settled, etc.	113 125 158 58 44 34
W. Too odious to be mentioned.	88 150 45 164 140 169
X. The middle or chief navigable channel of a waterway boundary between states (Internat. Law).	119 160 128 115 27 175 179
Y. A Mexican state whose capital is Merida.	90 118 22 71 52 171 135

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 17 of this issue.

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70 Miles from a Lemon

By Haydie Yates

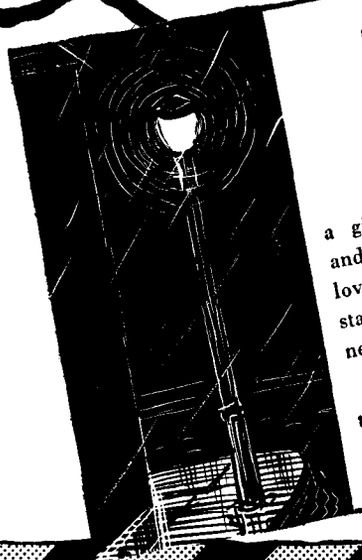
Reviewers squeeze "the Lemon"

Lewis Gannett of the N. Y. *Herald Tribune* says, "There's no Westerner horsier, cowier or howdyer than a Haydie Yates. She tells with immense gusto of the first cabin she and her husband built, looking as if 'designed by a Cro-Magnon in collaboration with an old Philadelphia trash scavenger'; of the real neighbors and the summer dude neighbors, of wild-horse and calf round-ups, of motorized cattle thieves, of snowbound winters, and the 'sigh and gurgle of a thousand cuds' heard in the ghostly darkness of a prairie night."

Struthers Burt says; "It is a high-hearted and witty book."

and the Cleveland *News* says, "It is an exciting and fascinating account."

$3.00



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